PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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THE MERRY TEN;

OR, THE SHADOWS OF A SOCIAL CLUB.

By JNO. B. DOWD.

AND OTHER STORIES

Suddenly, with a wild yell Jenkins sprang upon the table among the dishes and bottles. The next moment he half crouched, and gazed towards a half opened door, as though his very soul was in his eyes. A deathly pallor o'erspread his features.

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By JNO. B. DOWD

CHAPTER I.

THE MERRY TEN AND THEIR VISITORS.

"Come, fellows, who's going?"

"Going where?"

"For a cruise about town."

"Oh, there's plenty of time for that. Fill up again, and let's give them a parting bumper."

"Good—good—fill up again, fellows! A toast—a toast!"

"Well, here's to our visiting friends from over the river. May their club live forever, and each individual member flourish like a green bay tree."

The toast was drunk standing, followed by a hearty round of applause.

It was on the occasion of a visit from the Garrick club, of Brooklyn, to the Merry Ten, of Ney York. The Merry Ten had received them in their elegant rooms on Sixth avenue, with a generous welcome, where the evenings was passed in social intercourse. Songs, speeches and rare flashes of wit ruled the hour. A splendid supper was also given, the table fairly groaning under the load of good things.

The Merry Ten never failed to show a generous hospitality on such occasions. They had determined to make the visit of the Garricks one to be long remembered by them. Both clubs were composed of wealthy young men, all belonging to families well known in the two great cities.

They sat at the tables nearly three hours, eating, drinking, singing, speaking, and passing jokes and bon mots around, as merry a party as ever assembled. Harry Wilson then proposed, as late as the hour was, to take the visitors out for a walk through several of the noted thoroughfares of the city. But Sam Jenkins, another well-known member of the Merry Ten, proposed that they give the Garricks another bumper, which was given with a will.

"Once more to the breach, my braves!" called the president of the Garricks. "Let us return that toast and bumper before we go."

"Yes, yes! Fill them up!" cried a dozen voices at once.

"Here's to the Merry Ten!" cried the leader of the visiting club. "May they live and prosper to the fruition of their hopes, and last, but not least, may their pluck and purse never fail them."

"Amen!"

"Drink her down!"

"Here's a tiger!"

"Order! Order, gentlemen!" cried Charlie Pelton, the president of the Merry Ten. "It's now time for us to go with our visiting friends to the places we have suggested; but before we go we will have a song from Harry Wilson, who is the sweet warbler of the club."

"Wilson—Wilson! Song—song!" chorused the entire party.

Harry Wilson had a splendid baritone voice, and was one of the favorites of the club.

He rose to his feet to respond to the demand for a song, when some one cried out:

"Get up on a chair!"

"Put him on the table!" cried another.

"I may move to lay him under the table!" said Sam Jenkins, who was slightly the worse for the generous wine he had drunk, at which there was a generous roar of laughter at Harry's expense.

"My son," said Harry, laying his hand upon Jenkins' head, "I think you had better go to bed. Late hours are not good for one so young and tender as you."

"All right, (hic) old man," said Jenkins. "Jes' wait (hic) I put a brick (hic) in your hat." And snatching a hat from the hook on the wall, which chanced to be there, he smashed it down on Harry's head until it rested over his eyes and ears. It was a new silk tile, but it was ruined forever as a hat.

"Now warble away, (hic) old man!" said Sam, seating himself in the midst of a roar.

Undaunted by the comical situation, Harry pushed up the hat just high enough to get a peep at his surroundings. The wine he had drank was beginning to tell on him. As he stood on a chair it was quite difficult for him to keep his balance, at which a number laughed, and cried out:

"Brace up, old man!"

"Hug yourself!"

"Take a tumble!"

"See here, young fellows," said Harry, looking around with an amusing assumption of dignity, "if you want to hear me warble just keep quiet."

"Oh, you've got the double wabbles now!" cried Jenkins.

"Oh, dry up, Sam!" exclaimed Pelton, the president of the Merry Ten.

"I am dry," said Sam, emptying a glass of wine and dropping into his seat again, too full to stand.

Harry cleared his throat and commenced to sing.

"My grandfather's clock was——"

"That settles it!" roared Sam, falling off the chair onto the floor. "Bury me (hic) under the flagstones, (hic) and see that my (hic) grave's kept clean!"

The roar that greeted the interruption drowned the song so completely that Harry ceased singing and joined in the laughter, which lasted several minutes, other remarks being made that kept up the hilarity.

"By George!" exclaimed Arthur DeForrest, after a pause, looking down at Sam as he lay prostrate on the carpet. "I believe we will have to bury him; for he seems really and truly dead——drunk!"

And so he was.

He was sweetly sleeping the sleep of the man that tarries too long at the wine cup.

"Cerberus!" called Charlie Pelton, the Merry Ten's president, and the stalwart janitor of the clubhouse came forward.

"Take care of Sam, there. He's gone under!"

Cerberus stooped over the prostrate young man and took him up in his arms with as much ease as though he was only a boy of ten, and started out of the room with him.

"Hold on there, Cerb!" cried Harry Wilson, resting one foot on the table, and the other on a chair, "let me (hic)

look upon his noble face once (hic) more. I ne'er shall see his like again. Alas, poor Sam! How art the (hic) mighty fallen!" and then with an inimitable air of sadness, sang:

"Bury him deep where the willows weep,
And the thistletoe climbs its way.
Where all the frogs cry when the ponds get dry,
Sed, oh, send us a rainy day.

Chorus.

"For, oh, he'll never get drunk,
He'll never get drunk,
He'll never get drunk any more.
He'll never get drunk,
He'll never get drunk,
He'll never get drunk any more."

The entire party joined in the chorus with tremendous energy. Cerberus then left the room with a smile of triumph on his face, bearing Sam Jenkins, helpless, to a room on the floor above.

"Come, now! Who's going?" cried Simcoe Layton, lighting a cigar, and leading the way out of the dining-room into the reception-room. The entire party followed in the gayest spirits imaginable. Hats, canes and overcoats were quickly appropriated, and in a few minutes the entire party, with the presidents of the two clubs arm in arm, sallied out on the street. Each member of the Merry Ten took charge of a visitor, and followed, two by two, down the street. Some twenty odd men marching along one of the main thoroughfares of the city at that late hour of the night could not fail to attract attention. People turned out of their way to gaze after them. At last one of the party struck up a song in which they all joined with hearty good will.

"Here, you fellows, stop that racket!" cried a stalwart policeman, anxious to do something that would get his name in the papers, "or I will run you all in!"

"Great Jehosophat!" exclaimed Simcoe Layton, "did you hear the monster, fellows?" and the entire party crowded around the policeman's to laugh and jeer at him.

"I say, mister, ain't your face and buttons made of the same stuff?" asked DeForrest timidly.

"I'll run you in!" angrily retorted the officer, seizing him by the collar, and shaking his club over his head. But the next moment the officer found himself minus club and hat. They had been snatched from him in the twinkling of an eye.

But he held onto Arthur with grim determination.

"Shake me loose, fellows!" said Arthur, who was a mere child in the officer's arms.

Suddenly two of the Garrick club members seized an ash barrel, and emptied its contents over the head and shoulders of the officer, giving him a coat of dull ashen gray, and raising a cloud of dust that nearly suffocated the entire party.

"Ugh! Ah, the devil take you!" gasped the policeman, nearly strangled by the dust, releasing his prisoner to rub his eyes. The party took to their heels and ran up to the next corner, where they turned toward Broadway, leaving the unfortunate policeman to be led back to the station to have his eyes cleaned out.

On their way they seized ash barrels and hurled them into the street, raising clouds of dust.

One of the party ran up the steps of an aristocratic looking mansion and rang the doorbell.

"Who's there?" asked a voice from the upper window.

"Your son—dead drunk!" replied one of the Merry Ten, "and we've brought him home to keep him out of the hands of the po——"

"That's a lie! I haven't any son!" angrily interrupted the night-capped head of the family, "and if you don't clear out I'll have you in the hands of the police."

"It's your nephew, then!" said DeForrest. "Come down and——"

"Go away, I tell you!" said the night-cap. "I have no nephew."

"It's your uncle, then."

"Or your grandfather," said another.

"Or your grandson."

A shrill whistle was heard on the corner below.

"Come away, fellows," said Charlie Pelton, "the cops are coming."

The entire party again locked arms and marched decorously along the street. At the next corner five policeman came up and ordered them to halt.

"What's the meaning of this?" sternly demanded Pelton of the officers.

"You've been playing some pretty wild pranks to-night, gentlemen," said the sergeant in command, "and you'll find it doesn't pay to make dumping grounds of policemen's heads in this city. You must go with us to the station."

"We've done nothing to be arrested for," said Pelton, "therefore we decline to go with you. Come on, boys!"

The party made a rush, knocked down one of the police and put the others to flight. Seeing an empty street car coming up the street, they all crowded into it and rode uptown, where they got out, visited several saloons, drank wine, sang songs, and made merry until a very late hour.

Out on the streets again, they caught an obfuscated son of Erin, got a long cord, tied him around the waist, and fastened the other end to the knob of a doorbell of a brownstone residence. His attempts to get away alarmed the household, who charged on the innocent man, and engaged in a pitched battle with him. But the news of their exploits now began to be known to the police, so, at the suggestion of Pelton, the president of the Merry Ten, they all separated, and wended their ways to their various homes mutually pleased with the enjoyments of the evening.

CHAPTER II.

THE ACCIDENT.

One of the many duties of the stalwart janitor for the Merry Ten was to take up the members from under the table as fast as they succumbed to the influence of the generous wine, and carry them to their respective rooms upstairs. That was one—he had many others. He was master over all when the club was in liquor. He was charged to preserve the peace within the sacred precincts of the building, hence he frequently had to seize and carry off by force some of the members who showed a disposition to fight with somebody. This his great personal strength enabled him to do with the greatest ease.

On one occasion he had half of the Merry Ten to conquer before order could be restored, as they resisted and fought him like madmen. But he handled them as a rattler handles rats in a pit—literally cleaned them out in about two minutes. The next day the Merry Ten resolved that the process was too summary and voted to dismiss him.

When informed of their action Cerberus smiled grimly, shook his head, and said:

"Excuse me, gentlemen, but I can't go."

"The devil you can't!" exclaimed the astonished committeeman.

"The devil I won't!" said Cerberus, more emphatically.

"And why not, if I may ask?"

"Because I know too much about your Merry Ten," was the given reply.

And so he did.

They never discharged him.

But to our story.

On leaving the room with Sam Jenkins on the night of the reader's introduction to the Merry Ten, Cerberus carried him upstairs to an elegantly furnished room, where he deposited him on a lounge. He left him there to sleep off the fumes of the wine he had imbibed, and returned below to see the visitors and their entertainers off. The entire party soon left, and the house was left alone with Cerberus and poor Sam.

"This here Merry Ten Club is the jolliest crew I ever met with," he muttered, as he proceeded to see that everything was right. "They just leave things laying around loose, and then run after me when they get lost. Wild! I never did see such another crowd! I guess as how most every man has done something in his life that he's ashamed of—these Merry Ten follows in his life that he's ashamed of—these them gets too full every once in a while, and then I have my hands full."

Talking and muttering to himself, Cerberus closed the front door and then went back upstairs to attend to Sam Jenkins. He found him in a very restless state. By a liberal use of soda-water and hartshorn Cerberus succeeded, after a time, in partially sobering him. But it was long past midnight before he was sufficiently sobered to walk straight.

He walked about the room a while, and then went downstairs into the dining-room to view the wreck of the supper.

"By George!" he muttered, as he viewed the empty bottles and glasses, "we gave those Garrick fellows a good blowout. I'm vexed with myself for taking so much, because it isn't just the thing to get drunk nowadays."

Sam was a tall, fine-looking young man, and his family being very wealthy, he occupied a splendid position in society. But with all his wealth, the elder Jenkins was a very practical kind of a man. He had been trying for a long time to persuade Sam to go into business with a friend of his by the name of Grimes. But the business was such that Sam declined to go into it, thinking it would degrade him in polite society. His father then cut off his supply of money in order to drive him into accepting his plans.

But Sam was not thus to be driven from the Merry Ten club and polite society. He borrowed money from his friends, and kept up with the best of them until he was quite deeply in debt to some of the members.

He was thinking of his situation.

His purse was empty. The monthly dues of the club would fall due in a few days, when each member was to pay up.

"Out upon this confounded pickle," he muttered to himself, as he stepped before a full length mirror and adjusted his cravat. "That confounded business would ruin me if I would go into it, and if I don't pay my dues and the money I have borrowed I will be expelled from the club. It is social death either way. Hang it, can't the governor comprehend the situation? I'll have a plain talk with him to-morrow, for I've got to get a cool thousand from some place or other."

Just then Cerberus entered the room with a bottle of wine in his hand.

"Give me a pull at that, Cerb," said Sam, "and then let me out. I am going home."

Cerberus handed him the bottle.

He took a good drink from it.

"Are you sure you are straight enough to go, sir?" Cerberus asked.

"Plenty straight," said Sam. "Besides, the fresh air will revive me all right."

The janitor took a key from his pocket, led the way to the front door, opened it and permitted Jenkins to pass through. Gazing after the young man for a moment, he shook his head, then noiselessly closed the door and went back upstairs with the bottle of wine in his hand.

Out in the cool night air Sam Jenkins bared his head to the gentle breeze that swept over the great city from the ocean, and seemed to feel better. But his blood was yet burning from the heavy potations. His fevered brow grew cooler as he walked along uptown, though his mind was far from being calm and collected. His financial condition engrossed his entire attention.

"If I only had a thousand dollars," he muttered, "I could pay up and thus make my credit good for five times the amount. The old man won't give it to me, however, unless I give him my promise to go into that business with Grimes. Why the deuce can't rich men give their sons a competence at once without forcing them to——"

His soliloquy was cut short in a trice.

He had stepped on the cover of a coal hole which, being out of order in some way, tilted up, and let him slip through like a flash.

He alighted upon an immense coal heap unharmed, but quite terrified by the accident, the suddenness of which dazed him for a moment.

"This is awful!" he said, the moment he could collect his thoughts. "It's as dark as Egypt. I can't see my hand before my face. How the devil am I to get out of this pickle without being shot and captured as a burglar? Ah, here's a match in my vest-pocket—several of them. Maybe I can find my way out without being seen. What a joke this would be with the Merry Ten if they only knew it. Ah, now I can see—yes, I am down in the cellar of somebody's house—there's the steps that lead to the basement. I hope it isn't locked."

Jenkins cautiously ascended the narrow stairs that led from the cellar to the basement, and tried the latch.

It yielded to his touch, and he entered the hallway just as his match went out, leaving him in total darkness.

"Confound it," he muttered. "I wish I was out of this. If they hear me I will be taken for a burglar and filled full of shot. I'll light another match and go out of the basement door there."

Striking another match, he tripped forward to the basement door and tried the lock. Alas, it was locked, barred and bolted!

The key was taken out of the lock.

"Thunder and blazes!" he muttered. "I am locked in as sure as fate. This is some wealthy man's house who sees that everything is secure before he retires, and the sooner I get out the better."

He stood there gazing at the keyless lock, as if uncertain what to do.

Suddenly he found himself again in darkness.

His match had burned out.

"I'll go into the dining-room and go through the window," he said, and striking another match, he proceeded through the half-opened door into the dining-room. Everything there betrayed the opulence of the owner.

"The devil!" he gasped as he quickly glanced at one of the windows and looked out. "They are barred on the outside. What am I to do? Ah, I will secure a light, anyhow." And espying a small lamp on the mantel over the fireplace, he quickly applied a match to it.

It was his last match.

The lamp gave forth a bright light that revealed to him every object in the room. The closet doors stood ajar, in which he saw the glitter of silverware in great profusion.

"What a haul for a burglar," thought Jenkins, as he glared at the glistening plate. "If it were only cash, I might be attempted to appropriate it. But to take that and run to the pawnshops would, in the end, lead to detection and ruin. No—no—I won't take it. I only want to get out of this pickle, and then to-morrow I'll come around here and astonish this family by telling them how I went through the house while they all slept. Now, I must go upstairs as softly as I can, and—— Good heaven! Who can that be? Somebody has just come in the front door!"

CHAPTER III.

THE MURDER.

The unmistakable tread of a heavy man was heard overhead, and the next moment a woman's voice timidly asking:

"It's you, is it, John?"

"Yes, Martha," replied a manly voice. "Come down into the dining room. I'm as hungry as a wolf, and have something to say to you."

"I'll be down in a moment, John," said the woman.

"Great hewgags!" gasped Sam Jenkins, looking wildly about the room, "they are coming down here! Where shall I hide? I know from his voice that he is a dig double-fisted fellow, who would pound me into a jelly if he caught me here. I'll get into that closet over there."

Leaving the lamp burning upon the mantel, Sam darted to one of the closets, and esconced himself in it just as a large, portly, middle-aged man entered the room, bearing in his right hand a leather covered case or money box.

"Ah, Annie left the lamp burning!" muttered the man. "She always would have a light she can carry about in her hand."

He struck a match, lit the gas, and then blew out the lamp. He stood where Sam Jenkins could see him from his place of concealment in the closet. He was a handsome, well-dressed man whose very appearance denoted the man of wealth.

A woman in white glided into the room, clad in a long white nightgown, and white slippers.

"What kept you so late, John?" she asked, gliding up to his side, and throwing her arms about his neck.

"Business, dear, at the bank," replied the husband, for such he was. "The bank is in a snarl, caused by some forged drafts from Chicago. We have been up all night examining the matter. I thought it best that your money and jewels should be drawn out and deposited in another bank, so I brought them home with me. They are here in this box, some fifty thousand dollars, and all your diamonds that you are not using."

"Why, John!" exclaimed the young wife. "Was it not dangerous to bring so much money through the streets at night?"

"Yes, but I came in a carriage all right, you see."

"But why did you not wait until to-morrow, John?"

"Because I have to leave for Chicago in an hour from now, to settle the matter with the banks there; and I know not what might happen before I get back. You must take them to the Chemical bank to-morrow yourself."

"Oh, I shall never rest easy with so much money in the house," said the wife, tremblingly.

"Oh, no one knows anything about it," said the husband, laughingly kissing her. "Give me some supper, and then put the box in your trunk until morning—it's almost morning now," looking at his watch. "There is no danger."

The wife opened the other closet door and took from the shelf a covered dish in which she had placed her husband's supper, and set it on the table before him. He sat down and ate heartily, his wife, looking demure and pretty in her nightgown, sat opposite him, chatting merrily as he ate.

"When will you be back?" asked she.

"I don't know—five days, probably," he replied.

Having finished the meal, he arose, took the box in his left hand, turned the gas down low, and then followed his wife upstairs.

No sooner were they out of the dining room than Sam Jenkins crept softly out of the closet.

His face was a picture to look at.

His comrades of the Merry Ten would scarcely have known him now, so completely changed was the expression of his features.

"By all the devils!" he hissed through his clenched teeth, "that box and its contents shall be mine ere I leave this house. Fifty thousand dollars! Heavens, what a sum that would be for me!"

Taking off his boots and leaving them concealed in the closet, he crept out of the room, up the stairs part of the way, far enough to see which room they entered. The front room on the second floor, just as he surmised.

He then crept back downstairs and put on his boots, determined to wait until he heard the master of the house leave. He did not have long to wait.

The heavy tread of the husband was heard, accompanied by his wife, coming downstairs to the front hall. The farewell kiss was given, the door closed, and the wife ran back upstairs to her room.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed, and Sam Jenkins, pistol in hand, and his handkerchief over his face as a mask, prepared to ascend the stairs.

Noiselessly he ascended and placed his hand on the door-knob. The door was unlocked.

He opened it and stepped quickly inside.

The woman was kneeling before an open trunk, placing the box of jewels and money in it.

She turned her head and glanced up at him.

She seemed stunned by his presence, turning ashen-hued, yet silent as the tomb.

"I will trouble you for that box, ma'am," said Sam, in a hoarse tone, reaching out his hand toward her.

"No, no!" she gasped, suddenly hugging the box to her bosom, "go away! I'll cry out for the po——"

"The first cry will be your last," interrupted Sam. "Give me the money and keep the jewels. I am a desperate man, and——"

He threw out his arm and caught her around the waist. She struggled violently to free herself, and in doing so tore the handkerchief from his face.

"That seals your doom, ma'am!" hissed Sam, dropping the pistol on the carpet, and drawing a knife from his pocket, which he opened with his teeth.

"Mercy! Mercy! Oh, don't kill me—don't murder me!" she cried, frantically.

"Mamma, mamma!" cried a young girlish voice in an inner room. "What's the matter? Open the door—quick!"

Sam listened attentively for a moment, and then glared into the eyes of the trembling woman he held in his arms.

"Madam, there is one chance for your life!" he whispered. "Will you do my bidding?"

"Yes, yes! Only spare my life!"

"Call me your husband! Call me by the names you call him, and I will let you go."

"Oh, husband! John, dear, don't—don't—dear—dear John!" cried the terrified woman. "Ah, John, I love you so much! Don't kill me, John!"

"Ah, that'll do," hissed Sam; and like a flash of fate, the knife severed the jugular vein in her neck.

She uttered a single groan and fell dead at his feet. Sam seized the box and glided out of the room like a specter shadow.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SQUIRMING OF A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

How he got out of the house, Sam Jenkins never knew. The first recollection he had of himself was when he was walking briskly along the street with the box of money and jewelry under his arm. His soul was filled with horror at what he had done, and at times he would halt and almost resolve to return to the house and give up the treasure. But the thought that it would be ruin, if not death, to do so, deterred him.

"The die is cast," he muttered, and pulling his hat down over his eyes, as if to strengthen his desperate resolve, he pushed on toward his house—the residence of his parents. "No one has seen me come out of the house, or go in either, for that matter. I will keep the wealth and say nothing about it. Ugh! I never thought I would become a murderer. Great heavens! I wonder if I really did kill her! I could not help it. It was her death or my ruin."

On reaching his home Sam entered the house very quietly, as was his wont, by the aid of his night key, and tripped softly to his room.

Turning on the gas, he was horrified at seeing blood on his hand, arm and legs. The sight almost sickened him.

"Oh, heavens!" he groaned. "What have I done?" and angrily threw the little box of treasure on the bed, sinking in a chair. "It's a woman's blood, too!"

But he did not long remain idle. He had played a desperate game and won, and now he resolved to enjoy the fruits of it, since what had been done could not be undone.

He sprang up and rushed to the wash basin to wash the stains of blood from his hands. It was but the work of a moment. The stains still remained on his clothing.

"This must never be seen," he said, looking down at the blood-stained pants. "It will not do to burn them, as the smell of burning cloth at this hour would alarm the whole family, if not the entire block. I will send them through the waste pipe to the sewers. They can never be found or identified there."

The cunning of the devil seemed all at once to possess him. Hastily disrobing himself, he took his knife, itself showing bloodstains, and cut the pants into small pieces. When the process of cutting was all finished, he gathered them up and carried them to the closet, where he dropped them, one by one, into the waste pipe, until the last rag was carried away into one of the many sewers of the great city.

"That spot I can wash out without any trouble, I think," he said, returning to his room and examining the sleeve of his coat. At least I will try it, anyhow."

By carefully and vigorously washing his sleeve, he succeeded in removing every vestige of the stain.

"That destroys the last trace," he muttered, turning away from the wash basin. "Now for the treasure."

Eagerly seizing the box which lay on the bed, he opened it by means of the little key which he found attached to the lid.

"Ye gods, what a treasure!" he involuntarily exclaimed, as the dazzling light from the diamonds almost blinded him. They lay scattered about in the greatest confusion in the bottom of the box. Besides these there were five packages of banknotes of $10,000 each, making a sum total of $50,000 cash.

"Ah! This is the prize for which I have committed a crime. But the world will be none the wiser. I will move along with the Merry Ten as I have always done, quietly paying my debts and enjoy life as though the money was always subject to my demand. These jewels must be destroyed—the diamonds taken out and the gold destroyed. They can never be identified then. When the cash is all gone, then I can fall back on these precious stones."

Carefully closing the box, and placing it in his trunk, which he closed and locked, Sam Jenkins quietly rolled himself in his bed, but not to sleep.

Sleep would not come at his bidding so soon on the heels of a dreadful crime. He rolled and tossed until the light of morning shone through the windows into his room.

He arose, dressed himself, and met the family at late breakfast. His father, a man of regular habits, had eaten and gone downtown long before the sun was up.

"You were out late last night, brother," said pretty Nellie, his sweet young sister, a lovely blonde of eighteen summers, as he entered the breakfast room.

"Yes, I was at the theater, and then stopped at the club a while. The night is gone before any one is aware of it."

"Yes, and the day, too, if one has pleasant companions with which to pass the time."

Sam finished the meal in silence, and then returned to his room to finish his sleep. He slept until high noon, and then arose, greatly refreshed.

To dress and go out into the great city taxed his courage to a much greater extent than he at first thought it would. He knew the murder and robbery would be the topic of conversation, and that he would be compelled to listen to the revelation of all the horrible details.

"But the die is cast!" he muttered again to himself, for the twentieth time that morning. "There is no retreat for me now. I did not go there for that purpose. Fate was against me—tempted me, and I fell."

When he reached the first corner below the residence of his parents the first sound that fell upon his ears was the cry of a newsboy with an afternoon paper.

"Here, give me one!" he exclaimed, with a sort of fierce desperation.

The boy gave him a copy of the paper, and he turned quickly to scan its pages.

"Two cents, sir," said the newsboy, holding out a dirty hand for the price of the paper.

"Eh? What's that?"

"I want two cents for that paper, and no questions asked!" replied the boy, pertly.

"Why, didn't I pay you for it? I thought I did," said Sam, searching his pockets for the change.

"Oh, that's too thin," said the boy. "Give us the paper or the pennies."

"By George, I haven't a cent of change," said Sam, "just then remembering that he had changed his clothes that morning without transferirng his change.

The lad only grinned, and held out his hand for the money.

"Come back to the house with me," said Sam, turning squarely around and retracing his steps. "I forgot my change."

"Say, wot yer givin' me?" angrily retorted the lad. "Taffy on a stick? I won't have it. A man who would hook a paper would kill a woman. Give us that paper, you old snide!"

"Do you say I killed the woman!" gasped Sam, white as a ghost, dropping the paper to the ground.

"I dunno but yer did," said the boy, picking up the paper and walking off. "A snoozer that'd chisel a poor boy out of a paper would kill a woman for $50,000 twice every night."

The next moment the boy was out of sight around the corner crying the paper, leaving Sam trembling in his boots at his thoughtless words.

"What the deuce has come over me!" said Sam, turning slowly and resuming his walk toward his home. If I can't exercise more control than to be upset by any little newsboy on the street, I'd better travel a while. Why, my actions would have given me away to any shrewd person. I must be more on my guard."

On returning to his room, he found the servant girl there arranging things. Even at the sight of her he started, and glanced around suspiciously.

She appeared surprised at his sudden return, and asked: "What's the matter, Mr. Sam?"

"I changed my pants without taking out my change," he replied, going to the wardrobe and taking down a pair of pants to search the pockets.

"You didn't wear those yesterday," said the girl, laughing. "I saw those hanging there when I——"

"Yes—yes; I remember now," said he, nervously. "I put them away in my trunk last night. If you will leave the room I will change these I have on."

The girl, of course, vacated the room promptly.

"What a fool I am!" hissed Sam between his teeth. "Every little incident upsets me. They will think something is the matter with me if I am not more careful," and locking the door, he quickly changed the entire suit, and took one thousand dollars from the box in his trunk. Then, carefully locking the trunk again, he sauntered out of the house in a listless, careless sort of a way, and strode off down the street.

Seeing another newsboy, he brought an afternoon paper from him, and turned to read an account of the tragedy of the night before.

"A Terrible Crime!"

was the first thing that caught his eye.

"A wife and mother murdered!"

"Mysterious disappearance of the husband and father!"

"The daughter's story!"

"Accuses her father of the foul deed!" etc., etc. All in flaming capitals, every letter of which seemed to point an accusing finger at him.

But, by a desperate effort, he read the whole story without a muscle betraying any emotion whatever, much to his gratification.

Quietly folding the paper and placing it in his pocket, he proceeded on his stroll downtown, stopping at a tobacconist's on the way to purchase some cigars.

"Why, hallo, Sam!" cried a voice behind him, followed by a familiar slap on the shoulder that caused him to spring away as though shot from a cannon.

"The devil!" exclaimed Charlie Pelton, one of the Merry Ten, dumfounded at the sudden effect of his familiar salutation of his friend. "Why, what's the matter, Jenkins?"

"Oh, is it you, Charlie?" said Sam, with a ghastly smile. "By George, what a fright you gave me!"

"Look here, Sam, that big drunk last night was too much for you. You are all unstrung. Come, let's go and have a little bottle of champagne. You will feel better then," and the two friends locked arms and went off toward Broadway.

CHAPTER V.

A STRANGE ACCUSATION.

On hearing her mother's cries for mercy, the little daughter in the adjoining room began crying and calling her father and mother, and pounding on the door with her clenched hands. The next moment she heard her mother pleading with her father to spare her life, and then all was silent.

"Mamma, mamma!" cried the child. "Open the door, open the door! Has papa hurt you?"

But the mother was deaf to the pleading voice of her darling.

Never again in this life would she hear that sweet sound.

Mrs. Martha Perigorde was dead in her bedchamber, and little May Perigorde was a motherless child.

But little May was so thoroughly frightened that she continued screaming at the top of her voice. After nearly half an hour, one of the chambermaids was awakened by her screams, and came down to see what ailed her. Entering her mistress' room she beheld a sight that almost paralyzed her.

Her mistress lay weltering in her blood on the rich carpet that covered the floor.

"Murder—murder!" screamed the chambermaid, loud enough to be heard blocks away, and in a few minutes a policeman was pounding for admittance at the door.

By this time all the members of the household were screaming at the top of their voices, some of them not even knowing what they were screaming for. One of them, thinking that it was dangerous to remain in the house, ran down to the front door, opened it, and sprang out into the arms of the policeman.

"What is all this racket about?" the officer asked.

"Oh, mercy, there's murder in the house!" the terrified domestic cried.

"Well, tell me all about it," said the officer, quietly, "and then perhaps I can catch the murderer."

The result was that he was shown up to Mrs. Perigorde's room, where lay the unfortunate victim. He quickly opened the door of the inner bedroom, where little May Perigorde was confined.

The terrified little girl, a bright miss of ten years, rushed past the officer, and threw herself on the body of her beloved mother, crying:

"Mamma, mamma, speak to me—what made papa do so?"

The officer and all the domestics were thunderstruck at the child's words.

"My little girl," he asked, taking her by the hand gently, yet firmly, "do you know who did this thing?"

"Papa did it—oh, mamma, mamma, speak to me, mamma! Is mamma dead?"

"Yes, child, she is dead, and——"

A wild scream burst from the child, and she sank into a deathlike swoon by the side of her dead mother.

"Just let things remain as they are until I summon assistance," said the officer, who went down to the front stoop and pounded his club. In another minute or two an officer came running up.

"Go to the station and report a murder here in No. ——, and then come back as quick as you can."

The officer sped away as fast as his heels could carry him. Very soon afterward the entire household was taken charge of by the police authorities, and the best detectives set to work to unravel the mystery of the crime. At first no one would give credence to the story given by little May, to the effect that she heard her mother screaming and begging her father to spare her life—that she loved him, and begged him not to kill her.

But the unaccountable absence of the husband and father began to excite suspicion. The fact that the murdered woman's diamonds, which she had been in the daily habit of wearing, were unmolested on the dressing case, dispelled the idea that the crime had been committed by burglars for plunder, for so far no one could miss any valuables from he room or house.

As daylight dawned the news of the terrible tragedy spread like wildfire, and hundreds of people crowded the street in front of the house.

During the day, however, one of the directors of the bank to which John Perigorde gave his services as president, told the authorities that Perigorde was to leave that morning before daylight, for Chicago, in the interests of the bank.

Telegrams were then sent all along the line of the route to Chicago, authorizing the arrest of John Perigorde, the banker, for the murder of his wife.

That night he was arrested somewhere in the West, and the fact telegraphed back to New York.

John Perigorde was thunderstruck on hearing for what he had been arrested.

"It's a cruel hoax," he said, "for I kissed my wife good-by at three o'clock this morning, when she was alive and well."

"I hope you speak the truth," said the arresting officer, "for you don't look like one who would commit such a crime."

"It can't be possible that my wife has been murdered," said Perigorde. "I can't believe it."

"You'd better telegraph to some member of your family and inquire about it."

He did so, telegraphing to one of the bank directors, and received a reply to the effect that his wife was murdered.

The blow felled him to the floor in a deathlike swoon.

When he recovered, he asked the officer to take him at once to New York, without waiting for any legal formalities.

The officer did so, and on the second day after the murder, the accused was back in New York, a close prisoner.

His meeting with his little daughter May was heart-rending.

Her first cry was:

"Oh, papa, what did you kill mamma for?"

"Daughter—daughter!" groaned the grief-stricken father, pressing the child to his bosom, "I did not do it. You never heard me speak a cross word to mamma in your life."

"No, papa, I never did," said May. "You never said anything to mamma then, but I heard mamma begging you not to kill her. Oh, my poor mamma!" and father and daughter wept together in their great sorrow.

The victim was buried in Greenwood cemetery. The accused husband and father attended in a carriage, accompanied by two armed officers of the law.

When the last words had been spoken by the man of heaven, John Perigorde sprang forward and knelt at the head of the coffin, and cried out in heartrending agony:

"Martha! Martha, my beloved! Thou knowest I am innocent of thy blood. I would have died for thee, my heart's love. What mystery surrounds thy fate and mine, heaven only knows. But I loved thee as I never loved any other being on earth. We were happy in each other's love! We parted with a kiss, and now, alas, thou art gone. Oh, cruel —cruel fate!"

He owed his head and buried his face in his hands, shaken by convulsive sobs. There was not a dry eye in the immense throng that surrounded the vault.

After the funeral he was carried back to prison. Bail was refused, and the grand jury indicted him for the murder of his wife.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REVELRY AND THE SHADOW.

Charlie Pelton, the president of the Merry Ten, and Sam Jenkins repaired to a fashionable hotel bar on Broadway, and there ordered a bottle of champagne. Both were well-known young men about town, and, therefore, had many acquaintances among the young aristocracy of the upper tendom; here they were joined by two others who were not members of the Merry Ten. In discussing the bottle of wine, the terrible tragedy of the Perigorde family was also discussed, during which Sam Jenkins maintained a dogged silence, but drinking deeply all the time. The second and third bottle was called for, and within an hour the entire party was hilariously drunk.

"I say, Sam," said one of the party, "that 'ere—hic—chap who—hic—killed that 'ere—hic—woman was a cow—hic—ardly cuss, eh?"

"Who's a coward, eh? Take that, and be hanged to you!" and with that Sam planted a blow between the young man's eyes that stretched him at full length on the floor.

"Why, Sam!" cried Pelton, almost instantly sobered by the sudden attack, "what do you mean? That is one of our friends!"

"Hands off, I say!" cried Jenkins, frantically striking right and left, springing backwards, so as to keep the others in front of him. "I didn't do it! I didn't do it!"

"Here, Sam, old boy," said Pelton, rushing in to take him away, "you know me, Charlie Pelton, of the Mer——"

"Off! Off, I say! Death to the man who touches me!" cried Sam, aiming a terrific blow at Charlie's head. Pelton dodged and kept out of the way.

"Let me get at him!" cried the young man who had been knocked down so unexpectedly. "The scoundrel hit me for nothing."

But a policeman fortunately made his appearance on the scene, and was told to take Sam to the station house, as he was crazed with drink.

"Back! Back!" cried Sam, as the officer approached him. "I will not be taken alive! I didn't do it!"

"Got 'em bad!" said the officer, shaking his head.

"What, jim-jams?" asked Pelton.

"Yes," and the officer made a dash to take him off his guard.

But Sam was too quick for him, and he gave him a stunning blow on the ear that sent him spinning away like a top. But the struggle could not last long. Others rushed in, and in a moment Jenkins was overpowered and handcuffed.

"Hold on!" said Pelton, slipping a banknote into the officer's hand, "don't take him to the station house just for having the monkeys after him. Take him upstairs and leave him in my charge."

"You know him, then, do you?" the officer asked.

"Yes, he is my best friend."

The officer took him up to a room secured by Pelton, and left him there with his friend.

The moment he was overpowered Sam seemed cast down to the lowest depths of despair. He made no further resistance, but suffered them to lead him about like a child.

"Sam, old boy," said Pelton, as Jenkins lay prostrate on the bed, "that champagne was too much for you, eh?"

"Charlie! Charlie!" cried Sam, springing up and glaring wildly about the room, "you won't let 'em take me to prison!"

"Thunder, no!" exclaimed Pelton, laughing. "Why should they take you to prison? You did nothing but knock down Hal Bonner for insulting you."

Sam stopped and gazed fixedly at his friend.

"Is that all I did, Charlie?"

"Yes—and gave the policeman a taste of your fives when he tried to scoop you in."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, that's all. We all thought you had the jim-jams!"

"I—I believe I did, Charlie," and Sam drew a long breath of relief.

"Well, you must draw it mild for a time, Sam, and not go in so deep. You can't stand as much as I can, you know."

"I guess I can't. Confound it! I am vexed with myself for acting so foolishly."

"Oh, you are not responsible for that, old fellow. You can make it all right with Hal when you meet him again. You won't be able to be with us at the club to-night?"

"I guess not. I think I had better not drink any more for a week or so," said Sam, shaking his head reflectively.

"Well, I'll tell the Merry Ten that you are indisposed, and we'll drink your health. I'll go home with you, and see that you are duly put to bed and——"

"Put to thunder," interrupted Sam. "You only want to see Nell—that's all. The sly minx gave me a lecture this morning about the late hours I keep."

"Well, you deserved it, I should think," said Pelton, laughing.

Some time after, when the crowd below in the hotel had dispersed Charlie and Sam passed down the stairs and out into the street. They wended their way to the home of the Jenkinses, where Pelton was always a welcome visitor. He was Nellie Jenkins' accepted lover.

Sam passed on up to his room and left Charlie to the tender mercies of Nell, to which fate Pelton seemed perfectly resigned.

It was not until after the lapse of a week that Sam Jenkins met the Merry Ten in their clubhouse on Sixth avenue. He then seemed five years older than when they saw him last. But there was a recklessness about him that pleased them more than anything else could have done. He was generous to a fault, and spent money liberally with his friends.

"Ah, Mr. Jenkins," said Cerberus, as Sam appeared at the door of the clubhouse on Saturday night, "we have missed you very much. Glad to see you back again."

"Thanks, Cerb, old fellow. You've all had a good time, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir. Case of jim-jams night before last."

"Who was it?"

"Mr. Layton--took on like mad, pretending somebody's ghost was after him."

"The devil!"

"Yes, sir, and I took him upstairs, where he raved and screamed for an hour or more."

Sam turned as white as a sheet.

What if a ghost should come to him in his cups? He half resolved to drink no wine that night.

But he did; forgetting everything but the pleasure of the hour.

The song and toast went round.

All the Merry Ten were there in their places.

An elegant supper was served up, of which they all ate heartily.

Then the champagne was brought forward again.

"The Merry Ten, boys!" said Pelton, holding a brimming glass over his head. "May the fat of the land be theirs, and may their capacity to hold wine increase with years."

"Good! Good for you, Charlie!" roared Sam, drinking a bumper to the toast.

"Give us a song, Jenkins."

"Yes—a song, a song!" chorused the party.

Sam cleared his throat and sang in a full, clear baritone:

"Thine eyes, like the stars that are beaming,
Have entered the depth of my soul,
And my heart hath grown wild with its dreaming,
And the feelings I cannot control;
In vain do I strive to dissemble,
And vow that I love thee no more,
Yet a touch of thy hand makes me tremble,
And recalls all my sorrows of yore.

"Oh, why once again have I met thee?
And why do I strive to forget thee,
In vain do I strive to forget thee,
But my soul is enslaved unto thine.
Still—still do I love thee and fear thee,
Would keep thee, yet beg thee to go,
'Tis death to be parted, but near thee
'Tis woe—irretrievable woe."

"Good! Good, Sam!" cried the Merry Ten. "You never sang so well before. Give us another!"

"Oh, it's dry work singing," laughed Sam, refilling his glass. "Let some one else sing while I moisten my melody works."

"Trot out your tuneful lyre, Simcoe!" cried Arthur DeForest to his vis-a-vis across the table, "and give us something soul-stirring."

The laugh went around, and several glasses followed in quick succession. The entire party began to show signs of intoxication.

But the mad revelry went on.

Bottle after bottle was opened, and the song and jest went around. Sam Jenkins was the wildest and most reckless of them all. Springing upon a chair, he waved his glass above his head and sang:

"So say we all of us,
So say we all of us,
So say we all of us,
So say we all."

in which he was joined by the Merry Ten with tremendous power, making the welkin ring with their voices in the familiar chorus.

Suddenly, with a wild yell, Jenkins sprang upon the table among the dishes and bottles.

The next moment he half-crouched and gazed toward a half-opened door as though his very soul was in his eyes. A deathly pallor overspread his features.

"There—there!" he cried, pointing toward the door, "that white shadowy form with the crimson stains on her dress! Ha, ha, ha!" and the wild maniacal laugh that burst from his pallid lips caused every one to start from the table with terror plainly depicted on their faces. "Back! Back, I say!" he screamed, suddenly retreating to the other end of the table, knocking off bottles and dishes. "Point not at me! I am not guilty. Ha, ha, ha! There she goes—look—look there, the shadowy form of that woman! Back! Back, woman, I know you not! Ha, ha, ha! Yes, point at me if you like, but don't touch me—ha, ha, ha! Yes, I did it—I did it! Ha, ha, ha!" and with a scream he sank down among the dishes on the table, while a white, misty, shadowy form was seen gliding past him and vanishing through the half-opened door.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUICIDE.

The reader will doubtless remember the remarks of Cerberus, the bullet-headed janitor of the clubhouse about Simcoe Layton, one of the Merry Ten, having had an attack of the "jim-jams" the night before, and that he raved about a ghost haunting him. The reader, no doubt, sees a history in that little incident in the life of the fashionable young man, and he is not mistaken.

There is a history connected with Simcoe Layton's career—a sad heart history, which ended in blotting out the life of a fair young girl.

About a year before the opening of our story, Simcoe Layton, himself belonging to one of the old, wealthy families of New York, won the affections of Adele Heron, a young lady whose family, wealth and connections equaled his own in every respect. They became engaged, and the match was looked upon with great favor by both families. He was ardent in his professions of love, and attentive in his devotion. Few men were ever loved as Adele Heron loved him. He was her idol—her god—and she worshiped him with a pure and holy love.

But one day there came a panic in Wall Street, and many great private fortunes were swept out of existence in an hour. Among that number was the fortune of the Herons. The Laytons suffered considerably, but were able to retain their possessions. The Herons, however, were sold out, and were compelled to go into apartments more in keeping with their altered circumstances. But even in the loss of fortune and position in society which she had adorned, Adele Heron was happy and contented, for in the love of Simcoe Layton she was rich beyond the power of money to buy. Alas! how terrible was the blow she was destined to receive! How cruel and heartless the conduct of her lover, whom she had deemed perfect in all the excellencies of true manhood! Instead of going to her side and comforting her in her affliction, he stayed away, day after day, till her proud father, his heart broken by the reverses that had befallen him, told her to forget one so unworthy of her love.

"No, no, I cannot!" moaned the poor girl. "I love him better than life, and it is Simcoe Layton or death!"

"My heavens, Adele!" groaned the aged father, "what will you do? The man is false to you—he will not come to you."

"Though all the angels of heaven should tell me he were false, I would not believe it!" exclaimed the girl, whose love would not doubt its idol.

"Love is, indeed, blind," murmured the father. "Heaven help you to bear it when your eyes are really opened, my child."

Another day passed, and still the once devoted lover did not appear. Adele Heron sat down and wrote:

"My own darling:—They tell me you are false to me, but not until you tell me so yourself will I believe it. I will not doubt you, Simcoe, though all the world should say: 'He has forgotten you—he loves you no longer.' But why do you not to come to me, darling? I love you—love you more than life. Come to your Adele."

This note she sent to his residence by mail, and patiently awaited his coming in the evening.

But he came not.

The next day there came a little box with her name on it.

She opened it, and staggered back like one stricken by a violent blow.

It contained all her letters and little love missives which she had written to him during the halcyon days of their courtship.

But she did not faint.

But with a face as white and rigid as marble, she took up the note that accompanied the box, and read:

"Dear Adele:—The best proof of my unselfish love for you is that I am willing to give you up rather than hold you to your engagement, for I fear that my fortune is also swallowed up in the crash. Having no business experience, I could not support a wife, and I would not be the cause of subjecting you to a life less pleasant and comfortable than that which you have always lived. Let us forget that we ever knew each other. You may keep the ring I gave you. With best wishes for your future happiness, I am ever your friend, Simcoe Layton."

"False—false!" muttered Adele, in a hollow tone of voice. "My idol is cast down and broken at my feet. My heart is dead—why, then, should I live?"

She quietly folded up the note and replaced it in the envelope and put it back in the box with her returned letters. She seemed calm and deliberate in everything she did. All that day she spent in her room, arranging her effects and writing letters.

The next morning she was found dead in her room, clasping a letter in her right hand, which was addressed to——

"Mr. Simcoe Layton."

In the other hand was clasped a small phial with a few drops of morphine still remaining in it, thus showing by what means she died.

The letter to Layton read:

"With your love, which you have so often declared to me, I could have lived. Without it, I must die. I loved you solely for yourself—your conduct shows but too plainly that you loved me for my money. When my fortune was lost your love went with it. This revelation of your cold, heartless character pains me more than the news of your sudden death would have done. You will never again know what happiness is, for as long as reason remains with you the memory of your treatment of Adele Heron will haunt you like a spectre from the grave. Adele Heron."

This letter, together with the news of Adele's dath, filled Simcoe Layton with remorse and horror. In his selfish nature he had sought the love of the young maiden because she was an heiress; in his selfishness he deserted her because she was no longer able to bring to him a fortune as a wedding portion; and in his selfish pride he felt wounded by the revelation of his true character which the letter of his victim gave to the world. How well she told the truth may be inferred from the fact that, though he kept up his membership with the Merry Ten, none of them really respected him.

He took to drinking deeply, and at times roared like a madman in his cups, complaining of being pursued by a white, shadowy form, which haunted him like a ghost. They all knew what the trouble was, and never alluded to it in his presence. They rather sympathized with him, and shook their heads ominously, saying:

"He will blow out his brains some day, and that will be the end of it."

The reader can now understand why, in his cups, Simcoe Layton raved about a ghost haunting him.

But the prediction of poor Adele that he would never know a happy hour again had proved literally true, and now, after a year had passed away, all his show of merriment was the effect of sheer desperation. He became perfectly reckless in drinking, and spent money with a lavish hand.

But the time came when the bank where his money was on deposit refused to honor his check.

His fortune, which had been left to him by a relative, was gone. He had now only his father to fall back upon. The elder Layton was very wealthy, and at the same time very prudent. He was astounded at hearing that Simcoe had spent the thousands which had been placed to his credit in the bank.

"Such reckless extravagance would break a Vanderbilt!" he said to his son. "I will give you an allowance of three thousand a year, payable quarterly, but beyond that, not another cent!"

Simcoe was thus cut off with a sum scarcely equal to his club expenses. This did not add to his quiet repose by any means. He must have his pleasures—his champagne suppers at all hazards—and vainly sought to increase his allowance by winnings from the gaming tables. But he lost instead, and he was forced to borrow from those of his friends who doubted not his ability to repay on demand.

But matters went on from bad to worse with him, until, in his desperation, he attempted and succeeded in picking the pocket of Sam Jenkins of one thousand dollars. It was done neatly and quickly, but the lynx-eyed Cerberus saw it all. He grimly smiled and tracked him to a private room upstairs.

As he entered the room Cerberus saw Layton make a quick motion, as though trying to conceal something.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he chuckled. "That was quickly and neatly done, Master Simcoe."

"Eh! What did you say?" exclaimed Layton, in confusion. "I don't understand you!"

"Oh, you don't, eh? Well, give me just half of what you find in that pocketbook, and I'll tell you," said Cerberus, with a grim smile, extending a hand towards Layton.

Layton turned ashen pale, and glared at the wily janitor in dismay.

"The secret is safe with me, Master Simcoe, but it will cost you just half the pile," and Cerberus chuckled over his power.

"I am in your power, Cerberus," said Layton, in a whisper, "but I am not so guilty as it appears. Jenkins has owed me a thousand dollars, borrowed money, for several months. I knew he had about that much money with him to-night, and fearing he would get drunk and spend it all, I did what you saw me do. I believe I was right, under the circumstances."

"No doubt of that, Master Simcoe." said Cerberus grimly. "So there's a thousand in it, eh? Well, I'll take just five hundred of that."

"But—but—you understand that it's my money?"

"Only half—only half, Master Simcoe." said the janitor, extending his hand, and taking the wallet out of Layton's hand. He then opened it and counted the sum of a thousand dollars, one-half of which he took, and then returned the wallet to Layton.

"Now, look here, Master Layton," he said, "how do you think Jenkins came by all this money?"

"Oh, his father is rich," said Layton.

"So he is; but I happen to know that his father doesn't give him a cent until he agrees to go into business with Grimes, down near the South Ferry, and yet I saw him with a big roll of bills the other night. There's something wrong in that quarter, and I want to find it out. He has made a big haul in some mysterious manner. You know, he saw a white, shadowy form with bloodstains on it the other night, and fainted at the sight of it, just as you do sometimes."

"For heaven's sake, hush!" gasped Layton, turning as white as a sheet.

"Yes, I will, in a moment," said the janitor, "when I am through. You see, I think he has committed a murder, and got a pile of money, and——"

"Great heavens!" gasped Simcoe.

"I want you to freeze to me, and watch, listen and find out all you can from him. Get him drunk, and make him believe, in confidence, that you know all about his game, and tell him of some big haul you made once. If we can get him in our power, we can bleed him for a cool ten thousand each."

"By heavens, Cerberus. I will not do such a thing!" exclaimed Layton, impulsively springing to his feet.

"By heavens, you will!" hissed Cerberus, glaring at him fiercely. "You will do my bidding or be denounced as a pickpocket!"

"My heavens!" groaned Simcoe, sinking back into a chair. "I am in your power—I will do it!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOVERS.

The night he raved so wildly at what he said was a white, shadowy form with bloodstains on its garments, Sam Jenkins spent in one of the bedrooms on the top floor of the

clubhouse. His friend, Charlie Pelton, the president of the club, remained with him. He slept but little during the night, and the next morning he looked extremely haggard and pallid.

"I say, Sam, old fellow," said Pelton to him the next morning, "you look as though you had been run through a threshing machine."

"I feel just that way, Charlie," Sam replied. "I've got a head on me this morning as big as a bowl."

"I guess so. The fact is, you've been going in over your depth lately. I think you'd better check up and not go so fast, don't you?"

"Hanged if I don't think I'd better swear off altogether."

"Oh, that would never do, old fellow!" laughed Charlie. "How would a teetotaler look as a member of the Merry Ten, eh?"

"He might look and feel out of place," said Sam; "but he'd look and feel better than I do this morning, I guess."

"Oh, you are on the stool of repentance this morning," said Charlie, laughing. "You are a fit subject for a temperance lecturer. Just take a whisky cocktail, a brisk walk, and a good breakfast, and you'll be altogether another man."

After taking a bath, a whisky cocktail, and something to eat, Sam did feel like another man. But he could not blot out of his memory the terrible scene of the night before, when, as his brain was on fire with the wine he had drunk, the white, shadowy form of Martha Perigorde arose up before him and pointed an accusing finger at him.

He went out to Central Park with Pelton, and together they drank several glasses of wine during the day, though neither of them showed any effects of the liquor. In the afternoon they parted, Charlie going downtown, and Sam to his home to sleep and rest.

As has already been hinted, Charlie Pelton was engaged to Nellie Jenkins, Sam's only sister. She was a lovely girl, who loved her brother as few brothers are ever loved, or ever deserve to be.

The recent heavy drinking of Sam's alarmed her, and she began a series of lectures to him, at which he laughed good naturedly, and promised to reform. But Nellie grew more persistent in her entreaties, begging him to leave the club at once if he would save himself from becoming a common drunkard.

"Why, Nell, old girl," he said, that afternoon when she again begged him to leave the Merry Ten Club, "do you think I have no more self-respect than to become a common drunkard? Come—come, sis, you give yourself unnecessary fears and trouble on my account. I am in no danger whatever."

"Brother," said Nellie tearfully, "your very danger lies in your overweening confidence in yourself. Why, Alexander the Great died a drunkard, as have thousands of the greatest men of the earth. Why, then, should you not be as liable to become one as they? Come away from it, Sam, my dear, noble brother, and——"

"See here, sis," said Sam, in a good-humored way, "you are engaged to Charlie, and we take drink for drink. He is president of our club, and drinks as much as any of us. If your arguments hold good in his case as well as mine, then I will say you are in as much danger of becoming a drunkard's wife as I am of becoming a drunkard."

At his words she turned ashen pale. In her anxiety for her only brother she had not thought of the danger that threatened her lover. She loved Charlie Pelton with all her heart, and had promised to be his wife in another year. She had a tender heart, and a strong head. She was quick to reply:

"Then if Charlie doesn't leave the club and stop drinking, I'll never be his wife."

"Why, Nell!" cried Sam, surprised at both her language and earnest manner, "you don't mean that, do you?"

"Indeed, I do," she said. "I have no notion of becoming a drunkard's wife."

"But Charlie wouldn't leave the club just because you wanted him to."

"Then we will see which he loves the most, the club and his wine or Nellie Jenkins," quietly replied Nellie, her eyes flashing a determined spirit. "I am jealous of the wine cup, brother, and if he loves the cup more than he does me, I will never be his wife."

"Well, I'll be hanged if I don't believe you've lost some of your senses, Nell."

"If I have, I am glad of it."

"Well, if you succeed in getting Charles to swear off and leave the club, I will do so, too."

"I don't know that I can do that, brother. I have no right to demand that he shall quit the club, but will tell him that he must sign the pledge and keep it one year before I will become his wife."

"That would anger him, and he would break the engagement," said Sam seriously.

"Better, a thousand times better do that than for me to wed him and then repent the step. No, Sam, I am determined—my mind is fully made up that I will not marry a man who drinks. If Charlie loves his glass of wine now better than he does me—and had rather give me up than his wine, then all my womanly instincts would revolt at the idea of marrying him."

Sam Jenkins was astonished.

He loved his pretty sister, and was proud of her beauty, her sound, hard, practical sense and splendid accomplishments. But he knew the independent spirit of Charlie Pelton, and dreaded the result of Nellie's determination. He had been particularly anxious to bring about the marriage, as it was one in every way desirable.

That evening Charlie called on Nellie, and was welcomed as a lover usually is by the girl he loves.

"Where is Sam?" Charlie asked, when he was seated on the sofa at Nellie's side.

"He has gone out," said Nellie. "We had quite a quarrel to-day, and he is not in a good humor, I'm afraid."

"What—mad with you?" said Charlie gallantly. "How any one could be angry with you I cannot conceive, dear Nellie."

"I am glad to hear you say that, Charlie, for I have the same quarrel to pick with you."

"With me? That can't be, darling, for I won't quarrel with you—so there, now!"

"It takes two to quarrel always, don't it?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Then if you'll keep your promise not to quarrel with me we'll have no quarrel."

"That's so, darling," and Charlie imprinted a kiss on her hand. "We'll never quarrel unless you say you love me more than I do you, for I will never admit that."

"Do you really love me more than anything else on earth, Charlie?"

"Nellie, darling, do you doubt my love for you? I love you better than my own life. I could die for you, love, and think myself happy in so doing, if your happiness demanded it. What can I do to prove to you my heart's love?"

"Never bring another glass of wine, Charlie," she said, "and I will never doubt you, or ask you any other proof of your love for me," and as she spoke she laid a hand on his arm, and looked pleadingly up into his face.

CHAPTER IX.

WINE OR WOMAN—WHICH—THE ATTACK.

A look of blank surprise came over Charlie Pelton when Nellie uttered those words. He never dreamed that she would apply such a test as that to his love for her. He expected her to mention something that he would take a special delight in doing.

A silence fell upon them, during which Nellie could hear her own heart wildly throbbing. Her whole life's happiness depended upon the words he should speak. Her very soul was centered in her gaze up into his face as she breathlessly awaited his reply.

"Nellie," he asked, after a long pause, "do you really mean it?"

"Yes, Charles, I do."

"What has put such a thing into your head?"

"My brother has been drinking terribly for several months, and I know that unless he stops short he'll soon be a common drunkard. I talked seriously with him about it to-day, and when he said that you drank as much as he did, and that I was as much in danger of becoming a drunkard's wife as he was in ever turning out a drunkard, I said that if you loved your wine more than you did me, I would not marry you."

Charlie paled at her words.

"But you have said," she continued, "that you loved me better than anything else on earth. I will no longer doubt you. I am happy in your love, Charlie."

"But—but you really don't mean that, Nellie?"

"Yes, I do, Charlie. I am really in earnest. Why do

you ask that? Are you really so fond of a glass of wine that you hesitate between giving it or me up?"

"Nellie, I really cannot believe that you know what you are doing."

"I think I do, Charlie. I know too well that if you continue to drink, you are in danger of becoming a slave to the thirst and habit, for that is the way drunkards are made. On the other hand, I know that if you never drink you are in no danger whatever from that source."

Such arguments could not be refuted.

Charlie did not attempt to do so.

Their truth was too apparent.

"But, Nellie," he said, "your father has been drinking his wine every day for nearly forty years, and he is not a drunkard yet. Why, then, impose such a thing as total abstinence on me? Thousands drink all their lives without ever becoming drunkards."

"Yes; and thousands die miserable drunkards. You and Sam have been drunk many times together, Charlie. You are in a fair way to——"

"But just look at the awkward position you would place me in, Nellie," he said, interrupting her. "I am president of the most high-toned and fashionable young men's social club in New York City. Were I to swear off drinking, as you ask me to do, I would not only lose my position there, but would be frozen out of the club altogether, and be snubbed everywhere in polite society as a young man with very Quixotic notions in his head."

"All of which you would surely be willing to endure for my sake, would you not?" she said, smiling.

"But why require it of me? Why subject me to such an unnecessary annoyance? Why require me to retire from polite society?"

"Charlie, society has shunned many a man for drinking too much wine, but never for drinking too little of it, so rest easy on that score."

"You are mistaken there, Nellie. Your brother himself would not like me for a companion if I were to become a teetotaler."

"On the contrary, he said he would swear off if you would. Now, Charlie, my mind is made up. I will not stand here and throw myself at you—begging you to have me for your wife. You have your choice of the two—Nellie Jenkins, or your wine. You cannot have both—which will you choose?" And as she spoke, Nellie stood before him in all her loveliness. Her very paleness added to her beauty. Charlie looked up at the beautiful, determined girl, and yielded. Love for her was the stronger at the moment, and he said:

"I will choose Nellie Jenkins, first, last and always."

"Oh, I knew you would, Charlie!" she cried, springing into his arms and resting her head lovingly on his shoulder.

"How could I do otherwise, Nell?" he asked.

"I didn't think you would give me up for a glass of wine," said she, "and now I know that brother Sam will promise never to drink any more. Oh, Charlie, you don't know how happy you have made me to-night. I love you now more than ever."

"You will give us one week in which to sign the pledge, will you not?" he asked, after a pause.

"Yes—but why do you——"

"Never mind about that now, Nell," he said, interrupting her. "You will be satisfied in the end, so leave Sam and I alone for that time."

Nellie was only too happy in the victory she had gained to press her point any further. So she dropped the subject and turned to the piano, where she played and sang several of his favorite songs for him.

He left the house at his usual hour, with her kiss fresh on his lips, and wended his way toward the clubooms of the Merry Ten.

"By all the saints!" he muttered to himself, as he walked briskly along the street, "but this is a pretty kettle of fish! Think of me leaving the Merry Ten and turning a cold water temperance man! Bah! The very thought of such a thing sickens me! I wonder what has come over Nell all of a sudden? Sam has been going it rather steep during the last two months, and that's what's frightened her. I must see Sam and arrange some plan by which we can make her believe we are all right. By George, but she got me in a close corner that time, for she knew I wouldn't give her up for all the world! I wonder if she would have done as poor Adele Heron did when Simcoe Layton went back on her?" And the vanity of the young man about town enabled him to think that she would have died for love of him.

As he passed a dark portion of the street, when just opposite a dark doorway, a man in a mask sprang out in front of him, hissing:

"Your time has come, villain! You shall die by my hand while——"

"Hold!" exclaimed Charlie, springing aside as the stranger raised a bright, long, keen-edged blade to plunge to the hilt in his bosom. "I am not your man—back—back, I say!"

Charlie Pelton was by no means a coward, nor was he deficient in physical strength. He carried a pistol, but so closely did the man press him that he could only use his cane. It was fortunate for him that the cane he carried was a stout, solid limb, or he would have fallen a victim of the unknown assassin's fury.

He dealt the man a blow on the arm that sent the knife flying into the middle of the street. The madman stood disarmed before him, with an arm almost paralyzed by the blow from the cane.

With a scream of baffled rage, the man sprang at him again, and clutched him by the throat.

"Back—back, I say, or I'll brain you!" cried Charlie, stepping backwards so as to keep him far enough from him to strike effectively with the cane.

"It is death for one of us, Simcoe Layton!" hissingly replied the man, making another savage spring at him.

"I—am—not—Layton!" cried Charlie, dealing two or three powerful blows with the cane on the unprotected head of the masked man, which brought him to his knees. But he sprang up again, and renewed the attack, when Charlie discarded his cane and drew his pistol, which he cocked, and presented at the man's breast, with:

"Another step, and you are a dead man!"

The man recoiled from the muzzle of the pistol.

He glanced at Pelton a moment in evident astonishment.

"Perdition!" he exclaimed. "I've made a mistake—you are not the man!" and with that he turned and darted away through the crowd, which had quickly gathered when the first blow was struck.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISTAKE OF THE MASK.

The masked man's escape was as sudden as was his attack, and ere Charlie could recover presence of mind to pursue, the assailant was gone. Several of the crowd, however, started off around the corner, which, it was understood, was the route he took.

"Are you hurt, sir?" asked a man, stepping up alongside of Charlie.

"No, sir. Not in the least," was the reply.

"How did it happen?"

"I was walking along here when the man sprang out of that doorway and attacked me. He mistook me for another man, a friend of mine, for he called me by his name, and tried to stab me."

"Do you know the man?"

"No—he wore a mask."

In their eagerness to hear his story, the crowd pressed close upon him. He felt some one pulling at his watch-chain. He grasped the hand and wheeled like a flash to strike the pickpocket to the earth with his cane. The nimble-fingered chap escaped the blow by dodging, and the cane came down on a new plug hat on the head of a quiet, inoffensive young man who was looking on and listening to the story that Pelton was telling. The hat was utterly demolished, but it saved the young man's head from being cracked, as it turned the blow, which finally landed on the head of an urchin near by. The boy dropped like a brick.

The crowd scattered a little at this vigorous demonstration on the part of Pelton.

The pickpocket broke the watch chain, but did not succeed in getting either that or the watch.

"What's the row here?" gruffly demanded a policeman, coming up at that moment.

"I was attacked by a masked man a while ago," said Charlie, "who tried to stab me. I knocked the knife out of his hand, and then knocked him down. He then got away."

"Which way did he go?" the officer asked.

"Around the corner there."

"Do you recollect anything about him that you could describe?"

"Only that he was a stoutly built man, and——"

"Here's the knife, sir," said a boy, handing the officer a formidable looking dirk-knife, which he had picked up near the street car track.

"You must come with me to the station and give a description of the man, as near as you can," said the officer to Charlie, taking the knife from the boy.

"I am willing to do that, of course," said Charlie, turning to accompany the knight of the locust.

"See here, mister!" called the young man with the demolished tile, holding the hat up to view with the crown cut off, and the balance looking as though a thunderbolt had struck it, "what'll you give me for that there new hat, eh?"

"Do you call that there a new hat?" cried a boy in the crowd. "Shoot it!"

"It was new last Saturday," said the young man, running his arm at full length through it, "but it ain't new no more. I want another one, mister. I cannot afford to buy hats for you to practice on, you know. I ain't that kind of a hatrack."

"What's the hat worth?" Charlie asked, with a smile.

"It cost me five dollars Satur——"

"Well, get another one, and keep your head out of the way next time," said Charlie, handing the young man a five-dollar bill.

The officer accompanied him to the station-house, where he related the story of the attack on him by the unknown party, giving as good a description of him as possible under the circumstances.

"Where can Simcoe Layton be found?" the captain asked.

"At the Merry Ten clubhouse on Sixth avenue."

A detective was sent with Charlie around to the clubrooms, where they found all the members of the club engaged in killing time in games of various kinds.

"Simcoe," said Charlie, as he entered the room where the latter was engaged in a game of whist, "a man tried to stab me for you on the street, and had he not discovered that I was not you he would have soon made worm's meat of me. Come in another room with me, and see if you can throw any light on the subject."

"Simcoe Layton turned ashen pale at these words, and almost gasped for breath. He was unable to rise for nearly ten minutes, and seeing that every eye was centered upon him, he made a desperate effort, and sprang to his feet.

"Yes," he whispered huskily. "Come on! Come on!" And leading the way into another room, followed by Pelton and the detective, he sank down in a chair next to the table and buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud.

"Why, Layton, my friend," exclaimed Pelton, in the greatest astonishment, "what in the world is the meaning of this?"

But Layton did not seem to hear him, so great was his emotion at the moment.

"Wait!" whispered the detective. "Give him time. There is something back of this which we must know about."

And so it proved.

In a few minutes Layton lifted his head and gazed up at his friend and the detective. But such a look! He seemed to have grown ten years older during the last ten minutes.

"Tell me all about it, Charlie," he asked in a hoarse whisper.

Charlie then told of the attack made upon him by the masked man, and the language he used.

"He thought I was you, Sim," he said, "and called me by your name, cursing me, and saying that my hour had come. I knocked the dirk out of his hand, when he discovered his mistake and fled."

Charlie noticed Simcoe shiver as though convulsed by ague, while he was talking, and heard him mutter to himself:

"Yes, it's he—it's he."

"Now, can you give us any clue by which we can lay our hands on this mysterious, would-be assassin, Mr. Layton?" asked the officer, taking a seat alongside of him.

"I am afraid I cannot," said Layton, shaking his head.

"Why, don't you know the man?"

"Yes, perfectly well, but to tell his name would not benefit me any."

"What—this masked assassin who is trying to slay you in the dark! It would insure your safety to have him within the four walls of a prison!"

"I would rather take my chances of escaping him than to give him away, for reasons best known to myself."

The detective and Charlie Pelton stared at each other in dumbfounded amazement.

"Do you mean to say, Layton," Charlie asked, after a pause, "that you know who this man is, and yet you refuse to give his name to the police?"

"That's it, Charlie," replied Simcoe calmly.

"Are you in your senses?"

"I hope I am."

"Can you give any explanation for such extraordinary conduct?" the officer asked.

"Yes," Layton replied, but not for the public," and then arising, he tripped cautiously toward the door, opened it, and looked out. Then, closing and locking it, he returned and seated himself by the table again, preparatory to explaining his singular conduct.

About a week later Sincoe Layton left the Merry Ten Club at night to return home. He was followed instantly by a muffled-up figure. Sincoe was again attacked by the masked man. The muffled-up figure rushed to his assistance but was shot by the masked man. The wounded man regained his composure quickly. It was Cerberus. The others had fled from the scene.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WOUNDED JANITOR.

Let us now return to Cerberus, whom, it will be remembered, we left reeling and staggering from a bullet wound in the side, fired by the mysterious man in the mask.

"Perdition!" he hissed, clutching his side spasmodically. "I am shot, and the coward has got away! Here comes everybody to see what it means. They shall not know that I am shot if I die for it."

Of course a pistol shot in the streets of New York was never known to fail to draw people to the spot to see who did it. Nearly a dozen made for the place at once, to find only one man there quietly picking up a cloak from the pavement.

"Who fired that shot?" demanded an excited policeman, rushing up with the others, for a wonder.

"I don't know," quietly replied Cerberus. "A fellow came up to me, and putting a pistol to my breast, demanded my purse, and because I knocked him down instead he sprang up, fired at me, and then ran around the corner there."

"Did he hit you?"

"No," promptly replied Cerberus.

"Did you see his face?" the policeman asked.

"How could I, in this darkness?"

"Can you give any description of the man?"

"He was about my height, but not so stout, with rather sharp features, I thought, though I may be mistaken. But I think I would know him again."

"Give me your name and address," said the officer. "If we catch him we will send for you."

Cerberus gave a fictitious name and address, of course, for it was not his object to be known in the affair. He then turned and wended his way back towards the Merry Ten clubhouse.

"Ten thousand curses on this thing!" he muttered, pressing his hand against his side. "I am bleeding like an ox in the slaughter pen. I feel the blood filling my boot. I may have my death wound, for all I know. Hang it all! I had Sim in my power, and could have forced the secret out of him without following him just to get shot for my pains. Ugh! I am growing weak."

With great self-possession, and the exercise of tremendous will power, he walked into a saloon and called for a glass of brandy. He drank it, paid for it, and then walked out of the place without any one of the score of men present suspecting that he was shot and bleeding copiously from the wound.

Out on the street again, he made rapid strides for the clubhouse. In ten minutes he was at the door. Entering, he called to the colored waiter and general mixer of drinks, and asked:

"How many are there in the house now?"

"Several, sir; but they will all go soon," replied the waiter. "Are you ill?"

"Yes, I am sick; don't let anybody know it, though. Come up to my room as soon as they go."

"Must I close up the house for you?"

"Yes," and Cerberus passed up the stairs toward his room, the blood in his boot actually making a noise he could plainly hear as he stepped.

In his room he quickly took a drink of brandy from a convenient bottle, and then threw off his coat and vest. His shirt and vest were crimson with bloodstains. The bullet had ploughed a long furrow along his left side, and passed out through the back of his coat.

A glance in the mirror convinced him that it was only an ugly flesh wound, and that he was in no danger from it. He went into the bathroom, stripped, bathed until the bleeding ceased, and then tore up a sheet to get bandages to tie around his body. Turning off the bloodstained water, he took up his drenched clothing and went back to his room, where he lay down and patiently waited for the waiter below to close up the house and bring him the keys.

He had not long to wait.

The waiter came up with a glass of the new drink which he had compounded from the prescription given him by Sam Jenkins.

"Are they all gone, Nicodemus?" asked Cerberus, as the waiter entered and set the glass on the table near the head of the bed.

"Yes, sir, all gone," was the reply, as the keys jingled on the table by the glass.

"What's in that glass?"

"That's the Merry Ten Flipper," replied Nicodemus, with a broad grin on his ebony countenance.

"It is, eh? Well, look here, if ever you bring me a glass of lemonade like that when I want a drink, I'll show you a different kind of a flipper altogether. I'll flip you out the fourth-story window."

"Not much you wouldn't," chuckled Nicodemus, "not if you tasted the lemonade. Just try that glass, Mr. Cerberus."

The janitor looked askance at the grinning waiter, reached out his hand, and mechanically took up the glass. He tossed it off in an offhand way, and then smacked his lips as though testing its flavor.

By heavens, Nicodemus!" he exclaimed, setting down the glass, "that is a royal drink—who made it?"

"I did."

"But where did you get the idea from?"

"Mr. Sam Jenkins."

"Ah!"

"Yes, sir, and it is just all the rage downstairs. I've been told that to divulge the secret of its composition would put a mansard roof over my eye."

"Who told you that?"

"All of 'em—they say it must belong to the club alone."

"They do, eh? Well, that is just like those fellows. But see here, Nicodemus, I am quite sick. I want you to go for a doctor for me."

"Of course I will, but I didn't know you were so bad off as that," and Nicodemus put on his hat, took the front door key, and hurried out of the room.

In half an hour he returned with a physician, whom he showed into the room.

"Good-evening, sir," said the man of medicine, taking a seat by the side of the bed. "What is the matter with you?"

"Nicodemus," said Cerberus, "go downstairs and bring up two more glasses of lemonade."

Nicodemus instantly disappeared from the room.

"Doctor," said Cerberus, "can you keep a secret?"

"I can, sir," answered the physician in evident surprise, "but I will not agree to keep one of a criminal nature."

"Very good. I have a secret which you must know before you can prescribe for me. I assure you that there is nothing criminal about it on my part, but absolute silence as regards the matter is necessary to assure the arrest of the ones who are really criminal."

"Then I will promise to keep your secret," said the doctor.

"Very well. Two hours ago I was shot in the street, and——"

"You were—where?"

"In the left side."

"By whom?"

"I know not, but if I keep secret the fact that I was hit, I am sure to find out. I have a clue. Will you dress the wound for me?"

"Yes," and the physician at once proceeded to examine the hurt.

"Wait until Nicodemus comes and goes, doctor. He will suspect something."

"Is this the Merry Ten clubhouse?" the doctor asked.

"Yes, and I am the janitor," replied Cerberus.

The doctor bowed his head in acknowledgment of the information.

Nicodemus soon returned with the two glasses of lemonade, which he deposited on the table.

"Wait downstairs for the doctor, Nick," said Cerberus, and the waiter retired on getting the hint.

"Do you ever drink anything, doctor?" asked the janitor.

"Nothing stronger than lemonade or soda," said the physician. "I am a strong temperance man."

"Then you will like this lemonade. It is quite a favorite drink with the young men of the Merry Ten club."

The doctor took up the glass and slowly drained it of its contents. He looked wise, glanced at Cerberus half-inquiringly, and then set it down on the table without uttering a word.

"Now, let me see your hurt," he said, rising and leaning over the bed on which the athlete was reclining on his right side. "Ah, it's an ugly flesh wound, I see. Who dressed it for you?"

"I did it myself in the bathroom," was the reply.

"You are certainly a man of great endurance."

"It was necessary to preserve my secret."

The wound was properly dressed after careful inspection.

He then bade his patient good-night, and followed Nicodemus downstairs to the front door.

One night later Sam Jenkins and Sincoe Layton got into a discussion as they were leaving the club-room, beastly drunk, and Sam pulled a knife on Sincoe. Before a blow was struck a young man dashed in between them, knocking the knife from Sam's hand. Sam then struck the youth with his fist and felled him to the ground. Layton bent over the young man and made a startling discovery.

"Look, Sam!" he cried, "it is a woman in disguise."

CHAPTER XII.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

As Sam Jenkins staggered backwards from the young woman in disguise, Simcoe Layton removed the hat, and long tresses of hair fell to the ground, and in the lineaments of the white face he recognized—Nellie Jenkins, the sister of Sam, and the affianced wife of Charles Pelton.

"My heavens!" he gasped. "It is your sister, Sam!"

Sam pressed his head against his forehead and reeled like a drunken man.

"Is she dead?" he gasped.

"No; only stunned," replied Sim.

Just then several persons came up toward them. Simcoe quickly replaced the hat on her head, crammed the long silken tresses back under it, and lifted her in his arms.

"Sam," he whispered, "let's save her reputation from those fellows coming this way, and then we can have our fight out some other time, if you wish to do so."

"Yes, yes," replied Sam, scarcely knowing what he said.

"Shall we take her home?"

"No—no; not now."

"Where then?"

"To a hotel! Anywhere until she can recover. What does all this mean?"

"I don't know."

"There is one across the way there, Simcoe, shall we go over there?"

"Yes."

"Come on, then—go in and get a room for a young fellow who has been taking too much. That will disarm suspicion."

Sam did as he was told in a mechanical sort of way, and in a few minutes they were shown up two flights of stairs into a very comfortable room.

Layton deposited the unconscious Nellie on a bed, and then, having more presence of mind than Sam, who seemed utterly overwhelmed, he quickly seized a glass of water from the washstand in the corner of the room, and dashed it in her face. She started very perceptibly, and then uttered a groan.

"She is coming to, Sam," said Layton. "Don't say anything harsh to her—poor thing."

"Layton," said Sam, dropping into a chair, as great drops of sweat stood like beads on his forehead, "I can never survive this night. Life has been a burden to me, and now it is more than I can bear. My secret about which we quarreled, shall die with me. This secret about Nellie, only

you and I know it. I will trust to your honor to respect it for the sake of her mother."

"I will do that, Sam, for your sake, and everybody else whose interest in her is——"

"Forgive me for my impulsiveness, Sim. I was wild out there when you mentioned about dreaming that you saw me fall through a coal hole. But it is all past now," and the two friends shook hands in a friendly manner.

"I couldn't understand you, Sam," said Layton, wringing his hand, "but I supposed I had trod on your corns some way. I don't know anything, nor do I wish to know anything about your secret. Let's be friends in the future, as we have been in the past."

A groan from Nellie attracted Layton's attention, and he turned quickly around and went to the bedside. As he did so, he looked across the room toward a mirror which hung on the wall, and Sam Jenkins raised his knife above his head, as though to plunge it to the hilt in his breast.

Quick as a flash, he sprang back, grasped the uplifted arm, and wrenched the murderous knife from his hands, saying, as he did so:

"You shall not die such a cowardly death in my presence, Sam Jenkins! Nobody but a coward would commit suicide!"

Sam buried his face in his hands and dropped into a chair. He groaned and wept like a child.

"Be a man, Sam!" said Layton. "You will be glad I frustrated your designs some day. Wait and hear Nellie's explanation. She is recovering all right again. Keep up a good countenance for her sake."

"Oh, heavens, they are fighting!" muttered Nellie, looking wild and scared, as she sprang up suddenly on the bed. "Look—look! They have drawn their knives—heavens—they will kill each other—Sam! Sam!" and as she called the name of her brother he sprang up, and rushing to the bedside clasped her in his arms.

"Nellie—Nellie! My darling sister!" he faltered. "What does this mean? Speak—tell me!"

"Why, where am I, Sam—is it you—are you hurt?" cried Nellie, suddenly recognizing her brother.

"No, Nellie, I am not hurt, except to see you in this dress on the streets of New York at midnight. What does it mean?"

Nellie looked down at herself, and then up at the two young men who stood silently regarding her. Then the death-like pallor left her face and a rosy—yea, crimson tide of blushing confusion swept over it. She sank down on the edge of the bed, buried her face in her hands, and, womanlike, burst into a flood of tears. At this Sam groaned aloud in his anguish.

He thought his fair young sister guilty of—walking the streets of New York disguised as a young man.

Suddenly Nellie lifted her head, and looking at them both, said:

"I have done nothing wrong."

Sam groaned again.

"Brother, I will tell you all, and I know Mr. Layton will respect my secret."

"Yes—as I would my life," said Layton. "I know that you are incapable of doing a wrong, Miss Nellie. You need not make any explanations on my account."

"But I must—I will," said she energetically, "and you must hear me, too, Mr. Layton. You know Charlie and I are engaged to be married. Well, I thought he and brother were drinking too much wine, and so I made them sign the pledge. But when they signed it I thought I could detect some kind of a secret understanding between them that puzzled me. I haerd them make several sarcastic allusions to lemonade that aroused my suspicions, and so resolved to watch them. You can now understand my present disguise."

Sam looked up and stared at his sister like one in a dream. He seemed relieved of a terrible burden on his mind. He sprang up, took her in his arms, and kissed her.

"Saved—saved!" he cried. "Oh, Nellie, I could have died with despair when I knew it was you."

"I am glad, then—and now, my dear brother, I watched both you and Charlie in the clubhouse all the evening, and noticed that you drank nothing but lemonade. Even when you went into that saloon, where you found Mr. Layton, you refused to drink. I am perfectly satisfied now that you and Charlie intend to keep your pledge, and beg pardon for having doubted you."

Simcoe Layton could scarcely refrain from laughing outright at the allusion to the Merry Ten Flipper, for it was a glorious piece of deception that would floor the stoutest toper when frequently taken.

"You will not think any the less of me, Mr. Layton?" said Nellie. "You cannot appreciate the interest I have in those two men—a brother, and a lover whom I am soon to marry."

"I can fully appreciate it, Miss Nellie," said Layton, "for it has been my fate to know that woman can die for the man she loves, no matter how unworthy he may be," and bowing low, he was about to leave the room, when she called him back.

"But, now, another thing is on my mind that troubles me. You two have always been good friends. Why, then, did you fight each other to-night "

"Oh, that was my hasty temper over a little matter between us. We have shaken hands over it," said Sam, "and will never allude to it again."

"Oh, I am so glad," and Nellie looked the happiness she really felt.

"I will leave you now," said Simcoe, again starting to leave.

"No—come, go with us—stay with me to-night," said Sam.

"I thank you, but I must yet write two letters before I sleep, so I am forced to decline your hospitality to-night—good-night!"

"Good-night!"

Layton left the brother and sister together, and departed to his home. A minute later and Sam, with Nellie by his side, left at another door, reaching their own home in a quarter of an hour, where they entered without being seen by any member of the family.

CHAPTER XIII.

FATHER AND SON.

The next morning Sam Jenkins met his sister at the breakfast table, and noticed that she had combed her hair down closely over her temples.

"Why, Nellie!" her mother said, "you look as old fashioned as your grandmother did sixty years ago, with your hair combed that way.

Nellie smiled, and said:

"I didn't think it would make me look so odd."

Sam followed her into the parlor, where he said:

"Nell, I want to know if you are going to follow us again?" She looked surprised.

"Why no; but why do you ask?"

"Because if you do I must tell Charlie all about it, and——"

"No, no, no, brother!" she interrupted quickly. "Don't tell him, for I am now satisfied. But he and you act so strangely that I thought I would satisfy myself that you were keeping the pledge in good faith. Oh, brother, you know not how I love him, and how I tremble at the thought of ever becoming the wife of a man who drinks."

"Well, well, I won't tell him if you will promise never to do such a foolish thing again," said Sam, after a pause of several minutes. "Do you know I could have killed myself last night when I saw who you were!"

"I will promise never to do so again; only don't tell Charlie about it. He would never forgive me for it."

"There, I won't say a word about it, Nell; only don't you ever do such a thing again, as it would forever ruin your reputation were it known to the young men."

"Do you think Mr. Layton will keep the secret?"

"Oh, yes; he'll never say a word about it."

Sam put on his hat and overcoat, and was about to leave the house when his father came into the room, and said:

"I want to see you in the library before you go out this morning."

"Yes, sir; I am at your service now," promptly replied Sam.

"Meet me there, then, in five minutes from now," said his father, looking at his watch as he left the room.

Nellie looked up at her brother, and asked:

"What can he want of you, brother?"

"I have no idea," he replied, "unless it is to talk over that Grimes business again."

"I fear something is wrong. I never saw father look so troubled."

Sam met his father in the library, and seated himself near a table on which lay books and the morning papers.

"Sam," said his father, laying down his spectacles and looking him full in the face, "how much money have you got?"

Sam started and turned pale.

"Great heavens!" he mentally exclaimed. "Has he suspected me? Have they found out anything about Martha Perigorde's case?"

"How much money have you?" his father repeated.

"I—I don't know, sir," he falteringly replied. "I believe I have some little left yet."

"How did you get it?"

"Borrowed it," he said, suddenly becoming composed on seeing that his father was trying to make him commit himself to something.

"You did, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"How much have you borrowed in all?"

"About one thousand, I believe."

"Who did you borrow it from?"

"I am not disposed to tell my friend's name."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't know your object in asking me such questions."

The elder Jenkins looked at his son several minutes in silence, and then asked:

"What will you do when it is gone?"

"I don't know, sir," Sam replied. "Borrow again, I guess."

"But how will you repay—which you will be called upon to do some day?"

Sam saw the drift of the questions, and began to grow desperate.

"I let the future take care of itself," he replied.

"But the future will not pay your debts unless you show up something for it."

"When I can't pay my debts," said Sam, in hard, bitter tones, "I will cancel them by blowing out my brains."

"Ah! I am glad to see you have sense of honor left—some sensitiveness about it," said his father, rubbing his hands briskly. "I hope you have some ambition in life—some aim in view?"

Sam made no reply.

He hung his head in silence.

"Now, my son," said the old man, "I want to talk calmly with you, and I want you to listen to what I say."

"I have always done that, father."

"So you have; but you have not heeded my advice. Now, I have no desire to waste any breath on you. You are now of age and have no business. If you had millions at your command it would not be so bad; but having no prospects save what I shall leave you at my death—and I intend to live a long time yet, my boy—it is simply disreputable. You spend about five thousand a year, with no income to back it up. Business men will look upon you as worthless, and regard you as a gambler or something worse. Now, I am not going to pay your debts, nor leave you a penny in my will unless you show me that you deserve it. If you will not go into business with Grimes, select some other business, with a careful business man to assist you, and I will put fifty thousand dollars into the business in your name, and pay all your debts for you. Now, what will you do?"

This firm stand taken by his father took Sam by surprise. He knew not what reply to make, and for a time was silent. But second thought came to his aid, and he said:

"I will go into business—but not with Girmes."

"What business, then, will you choose?"

"I don't know yet, but will look around and fix upon something."

"Very well. I will give you a reasonable length of time. The choice you make must be a steady, honest, thorough-going business man."

"Very well. I will submit everything to you, and be guided by you."

"That's right. Show to the world that you cannot only keep a fortune, but make one as well, and men will think more of you, and be ready to place capital at your disposal when you need it."

Thus ended the interview with his father. Sam went up to his room, and carefully locked the door. He then opened his trunk and went to the bottom of it. The box of money and jewels was safe. He opened and took from it a thousand dollars, closed, locked it, and replaced it in the bottom of his trunk, which he likewise locked carefully.

"What did father want of you, brother?" Nellie asked, as she caught him in the hall.

"Oh, he wanted to talk about that Grimes business again," said Sam, "but I told him I would not touch Grimes, but would go into some other business with some other man."

"You did? What did he say to that?"

"Oh, it tickled him almost to death, and I am to look around for something that will pay."

"You will go into business, then?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Brother, can't you persuade Charlie to do so, too?"

"See here, Nell, why don't you go in for making a preacher out of Pelton? I'd make a bishop out of him if I were you."

Nellie blushed crimson and ran away, and Sam put on his hat and left the house.

"The old man has got his back up," muttered Sam to himself, as he walked down the street, "and means business. Heavens, how he did frighten me when he commenced on me. I was afraid he had found out something, and was trying to catch me on a hitch. But he doesn't know a thing, nor Sim Layton, either. But that dream was curious. It set me almost wild. But what shall I do? I've money enough to last me ten years at five thousand a year, or to start me in a good business. I don't know how much the diamonds will bring, but it would be a large sum if sold by a square dealer. I'll talk with Charlie, and see what he thinks about going into business."

It was evening again before he met Charlie. He then told him of his interview with his father that morning, and said:

"He means business, Charlie, and won't take any taffy."

"And he is right, Sam," said Charlie. "His head is perfectly level on that thing. The best thing you can do is to settle down into a plodding, go-ahead business man."

"I suppose that advice won't hold good in your case, eh?"

"Yes, it will. I am going into business, too, before I marry."

"The deuce you are! Has the old man been talking to you, too?"

"Yes; and we agreed very well on the course to be pursued."

"Oh, that sly Nell," laughed Sam. "She's at the bottom of all this. By the way, Charlie, she is a little suspicious about that lemonade. You must be cautious and not say anything about it in her presence."

"Has anybody given us away?"

"No; only she thought we were having a little underground traffic in that lemonade when we were talking about it on the night we signed the pledge."

"She's as sharp as a needle," and Charlie smiled as he passed the compliment. "I guess I'll have to give up the lemonade when we marry."

CHAPTER XIV.

CORNERED.

The next day after receiving his wound, the janitor of the Merry Ten Clubhouse was too ill to attend to his duties. He bargained with Nicodemus, the waiter, to perform his duties for him at a stipulated price.

Several of the members called on him in his room, among them Simcoe Layton himself, the unconscious cause of the wound.

"What's the matter, Cerberus?" Layton asked.

"I hardly know," said the janitor. "The doctor said last night that my whole system was badly deranged. I suppose I will be all right again in a few days."

"Oh, I guess you will," said Sim; but when he left the room, he muttered: "But I'd gladly bear all the funeral expenses and throw in a monument, if you'd only kick the bucket."

The doctor called for several days in succession, and dressed the wound and tested the merit of the Merry Ten Flipper. Such lemonade he had never before tasted. He always went away feeling that it was good—glorious to have such a patient as the janitor of the clubhouse. But the time came when Cerberus could no longer remain a patient. He got well, paid the bill, and dismissed his physician.

He noticed that Sam Jenkins did not get drunk any more, and that Charlie Pelton drank less than formerly, and wondered what had come over them of late.

He found a chance to whisper to Simcoe Layton, as he sat at cards with three others that one evening:

"Come up to my room before you go home?"

Layton changed color slightly, and nodded his head.

In about an hour he passed quietly upstairs to the janitor's room. Cerberus was there waiting for him.

"What do you want, Cerberus?" he asked.

"I want to know if you have done as you promised?"

"No," was the blunt reply.

"Why not?"

"For two reasons—lack of inclination and opportunity."

"The devil! Do you mean to say that you have no inclination to do it?"

"I do."

"By the Lord Harry, if you don't do it within a week I'll have you in jail as a common pickpocket."

"And I'll swear you got half the money!" retorted Layton.

This staggered Cerberus.

"But I have not so much to lose as you," he said.

"No; but it is as much to you as mine is to me," and with that he turned and left the room, leaving the astonished Cerberus alone.

"By my soul, if he doesn't dare me to do it!" muttered the janitor, "and I'll be hanged if I don't teach him a lesson he will not soon forget!"

That evening Sam Jenkins and Simcoe Layton walked home together.

"Sam, meet me at the club to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock on special business," said Layton, at parting.

"Promptly," answered Sam, as they shook hands.

They met at the hour to the minute.

"Sam," said Layton, when they were seated alone, "three weeks ago you lost a thousand dollars, did you not?"

"Yes," and Sam started with surprise; "but how did you find it out? I said not a word to any one about it."

"I accidentally found out that Cerberus had it, and prevailed upon him to return it. He gave it to me because I threatened his arrest and his dismissal from his position. But I promised not to let any one know it but you, and that he would not lose his position in consequence of it. Here is the money, and I hope you will make my promise to him good by not saying anything about it to the others."

Sam was astounded.

He took the roll of bills and stowed them away in his pocket.

"Layton," he said, "you are a brick. I will remember this kindness. I said nothing about the loss at the time, as I feared that it would injure, or cast reflection on the reputation of the club. But Cerberus will never forgive you. He will be your deadliest foe after this."

"Yes, I know that, but I am not afraid of him."

"It won't do for you ever to get full and fall into his hands again."

"No, I will look out for that," and the two friends shook hands and went out for a stroll.

In the evening they went to the theater, and did not reach the club until quite late. They found a number of visitors present, enjoying themselves and making the time pass pleasantly.

"I want to see you," said Cerberus, as he passed behind Layton, during the evening.

Layton wheeled around and followed him.

"What about?" he asked.

"I want five hundred dollars," said Cerberus.

"Well, what's that to me?"

"I'll give you away unless you come down with it."

"Very well, the sooner the better. Jenkins—here a moment please."

Jenkins responded promptly.

"What is it, Sim?" he asked.

"Cerberus has something he wishes to say to you in my presence," said Layton.

"No, no! Not now! Some other time will do!" said Cerberus, completely upset by the cool bravery of Simcoe Layton.

"Very well—any time will do, Cerberus, old fellow," said Sam, very good-naturedly, as he and Layton turned away from the janitor.

"Perdition!" hissed Cerberus. "What does he mean by defying me? Does he think that I dare not do it for fear of incriminating myself? By the Lord Harry he does not know me if he does. I will give him until to-morrow to come down with the money, and if he does not I will give him dead away to Sam Jenkins."

While wending their way home at a late hour, Layton and Jenkins talked over the matter of Cerberus and the robbery.

"Do you know he tried to blackmail me to-night?" said Layton.

"How?"

"I don't know. He said that he had me where he could ruin me, and that $500 alone would save me, or else he would tell you and the other members of the club. I called you up for him to execute the threat, but he backed down and would not say a word."

"By George, the rascal must leave the club!" exclaimed Sam. "Such impudence cannot be tolerated."

"I think so myself, but let's wait and see what he will do."

"Well, then, we will put him out," added Sam; "though he has a good grip on us, you know, and could ruin our club if he can make the public believe him."

"But the public would not believe me. We could all sign a card that would overwhelm him forever."

The next evening Cerberus made another demand on Layton.

"Not a cent!" was the emphatic reply.

"Then you are a ruined man, Simcoe Layton!" hissed Cerberus.

"Go ahead, old fellow. I can stand as much as you can."

An hour later Cerberus requested Jenkins to meet him in his room, as he desired to see him on important business.

Sam went up a few minutes later, followed by Simcoe, and they both entered the room together.

"What do you want here, Mr. Layton?" growled the janitor.

"I want to see this thing through, old fellow, that's all," replied Layton.

"You just get out, or I'll pitch you downstairs."

"No, you won't, either."

Cerberus darted toward him to make good his threat.

"Stop!" cried Layton, aiming a revolver at his head. "Another step, and what few brains you have in that black mudsill of a head will be scattered all over this room. Now, tell that thing straight, or I'll show you what it is to fool with me."

Cerberus recoiled.

There was death in Layton's eye.

He dared not move an inch forward.

"How's this, Cerberus?" Jenkins asked.

Cerberus made no reply.

"Layton gave me back the money you stole from me, and said——"

"That I stole?" exclaimed the janitor, as if suddenly stung.

"Yes; and which he made you give up on pain of dismissal and arrest," said Sam. "He says that now you are trying to blackmail him with some terrible secret you hold over him. I want to tell you that that kind of thing is played out here."

"Ten thousand devils!" exclaimed Cerberus, glaring savagely at Layton, under whose pistol he still cowered, "did you tell him that?"

"I did," replied Layton, firmly.

"When you knew it was false?"

"False! Ha, ha, ha! Cerberus, we all know you here. You can't impose on any one of the Merry Ten."

"By heavens, I'll murder you!"

"Stop—do you think I would let you get your hands on me as long as I hold this weapon? Move an inch and you are a dead man. Now, shall I tell Sam of your plot against him?"

"Out with it!" exclaimed Sam, quickly drawing his revolver and leveling it at the janitor's head. "If he moves I will perforate him through and through. Your days as janitor of this house are numbered, my fine fellow. Anything you can say about us won't hurt anybody, for we can all publish a card that will settle your hash."

With a yell of rage, Cerberus seized a chair and hurled it at Layton's head, and then dashed at Sam Jenkins, putting out the light as he passed it, leaving them in total darkness.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DEATH OF CERBERUS.

On finding the light in the room mysteriously extinguished, Sam Jenkins and Simcoe Layton at once darted towards the door which opened into the hall or corridor.

The door was locked, but Sam deftly turned the key and opened the door, thus giving sufficient light from the gas jet which burned in the corridor, to enable them to discover

Cerberus with a bright-bladed dirk-knife in his hand. Jenkins quickly leveled his pistol at him.

"Drop that, or down you go!" he said, coolly.

The enraged janitor glared defiantly at him.

Layton also leveled his revolver at him.

"It's all up with you, Cerberus," said he. "You'll go up for attempted murder."

"Drop that knife, I say!" sternly commanded Jenkins, "or I'll put half a dozen bullets through you in just one minute."

The knife dropped from the hand of the janitor and stuck on its point in the floor.

"Now get back into the corner there!" said Sam.

Being powerless to resist, the burly janitor did as he was ordered, with a scowl on his face that boded no good to the two young men should he ever be able to turn the tables on them.

"Hold up both your hands!" sternly commanded Sam.

Up went both hands above his head.

"Move an inch without my permission, and you are a dead black man. Sim, take up that knife, please, and hand it to me."

Layton took up the knife and handed it to Jenkins.

"Now go for a policeman."

Simcoe looked at Sam in evident surprise.

"Do you mean it?" he asked.

"Of course I do! Hasn't the rascal tried to kill us both?"

"But hadn't we better see the others about it first?" said Layton, evidently unwilling to go to the extent of invoking any other law than the will of the club.

"What may they have to do with it?" Sam asked. "He picked my pocket and then tried to murder me. I will put him where he will do the state some service, or my name is not Sam Jenkins."

"Ha, ha, ha! I won't go there alone," said Cerberus, with a harsh chuckle. "The Merry Ten will be a Merry Ten no more if I go there."

"I guess we had better see the other fellows about it first!" said Layton, shaking his head at Sam.

"You may do as you please," said Sam, determinedly, "but I am going to rid the club of this fellow. We've allowed him to rule the roost too long. Stop—hands up! If you attempt any tricks with me I'll blow out your piggish brains."

"Just wait until I call up Pelton," and Simcoe Layton left the room, going down the stairs three steps at a time. The next moment half a dozen members of the Merry Ten, with Charlie Pelton at their head, came bounding up the stairs.

"Great hewgags, Sam!" exclaimed Charlie. "What does this mean?"

"It means that Cerberus is no longer the janitor of the Merry Ten," said Sam.

"The devil! Who discharged him?"

"I did, or will," he replied, "which is all the same."

"But what's the matter? Why do you keep him in that position?"

"Stand back! Keep out of my way! The rascal has been shaking a rod of iron over us for a long time, and just now he made an attemnt on my life. Who will call a policeman?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, call an officer," said Cerberus, with a dry, cynical laugh. "You can all afford to do it."

"See here, fellows," said Arthur DeForest, "let's settle this privately among ourselves, if we can, without getting into court with it. It won't do, you know."

"The devil it won't!" exclaimed Sam.

"No, you know it won't, Sam Jenkins, for it would forever kill the club."

"Then let the club die!"

Cerberus very deliberately dropped his hands to his sides and laughed sardonically.

"Stop where you are until I am done with you!" ordered Sam, and the janitor dropped into a chair near by.

"Now, see here, fellows," said Sam, to those around him. "there's a majority of us here. I move that we discharge him at once."

"I second the motion," said Layton.

"But this isn't a business meeting of the club," said DeForrest.

"No, but the suspension can be made now, and the regular business meeting will endorse the action."

"How know you that?"

"Because the Merry Ten will not keep a pickpocket as janitor of their clubrooms!" exclaimed Sam.

"A pickpocket!" cried several at once.

"Yes. He picked my pocket of a thousand dollars!"

Every eye was turned on the janitor, who returned their gaze with a smile of contempt.

"It's a lie!" he said.

"Simcoe Layton saw him do it, and compelled him to give up the money," said Sam.

"Is that so?" Pelton asked, turning to Layton.

"Yes," replied Layton.

"That settles it," said Pelton. "Cerberus, I am sorry for you, but you must go."

Cerberus only smiled.

"I think we are acting very hasty in the matter," said Arthur DeForrest. "We'd better leave it alone until the regular business meeting of the club."

"And let a pickpocket remain janitor?" demanded Sam.

"But Cerberus says he did nothing of the kind," said Arthur, by way of excuse for his action.

"You have the positive proof. Here is the money that was returned to me. If you dare to throw at me a hint that the charge is false, Arthur DeForest, I'll put a head on you that——"

"Come, come, fellows!" exclaimed Pelton. "Let's have no quarreling among ourselves. We can settle this matter between ourselves without any further trouble."

"You have nothing to settle but the question of his discharge," said Sam, determinedly. "Whether you discharge him or not, he will go to prison for picking my pocket and attempting my life. I guess you will then be compelled to select some other one to perform his duties. Now, Sim, will you go for an officer?"

"Yes."

"Then do so, and I will keep him here until you come back."

Simcoe Layton left the room.

Cerberus trembled as he saw him leave. His bravado began to fail him.

"If I am arrested every one of you will be ruined," he said, glaring around at the young men in a very significant manner. Arthur DeForrest also paled, and trembled like a leaf.

"I will go your bail, Cerberus," he said to the janitor.

"If you do you will leave the club, or else I will," said Sam Jenkins.

"You can leave then, for I will not!" retorted Arthur, hotly.

"No, you will leave, for you will be expelled for taking sides with a pickpocket against a member of the club."

"Gentlemen," said Pelton, who apprehended a fight between the two young men, "there is no need that any bad blood be roused up in the matter—ah—here comes the officer."

Simcoe Layton entered the room with two stalwart policemen.

Cerberus sprang to his feet and made a flying leap across the room, clutching desperately at Sam Jenkins' throat.

"I'll kill you now, you infernal——"

"Bang!" went Sam's pistol, and Cerberus threw up his hands, clutched wildly at space, gasped, clutched his left breast convulsively, staggered half way across the room, back again, reeling like a drunken man, and dropped dead at the feet of his slayer.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN SELF-DEFENSE.

One of the officers stooped over and examined him.

"Dear as a herring!" he said.

"I am sorry," remarked Sam, "but I would do it a dozen times over under similar circumstances."

"It was purely in self-defense," said Pelton.

"Yes—self-defense," added Arthur DeForrest, "and he deserved it. I congratulate you, Sam, on your lucky escape. He would have killed you if you had not fired when you did. It was so sudden, and to the surprise of every member present, he rushed forward, grasped Sam by the hand, and wrung it with excessive cordiality.

Sam was somewhat surprised as he looked at Arthur.

He little thought of what a relief to him was the death of the crafty janitor.

Cerberus had long had him in his power, bleeding him regularly like a leech.

"Well," said the officer, looking at Sam, "while I'm of the opinion that you're not to blame, still, where a man has been killed, it's my duty to take you and let the judge discharge you."

"I am quite ready to go," said Sam. "Take the names of these witnesses."

"We'll go with you," said Pelton and the others, "and see that you have fairplay."

At the stationhouse the officer told his story truthfully, which was corroborated by the others present.

Sam was placed in the captain's room for the night, and left in charge of an officer. Early the next morning his father was there to see him, accompanied by Nellie and Charlie Pelton.

"Oh, brother!" cried Nellie, throwing herself into his arms. "Had you heeded me and left that club when you signed the pledge this would never have happened."

"Tut—tut, Nellie!" replied Sam. "A man is liable to be attacked at any time in the streets of New York. Thieves, pickpockets and murderers are to be found everywhere in the city."

"Was this man a thief?" the elder Jenkins asked.

"Yes," said Charlie. "A regular pickpocket, which we didn't know till one of our fellows caught him going through Sam's pockets and made him give up the money."

"How much did he get?" the father asked.

"About a thousand dollars, I understood Layton to say."

"A thousand dollars!" exclaimed the old man, staring in surprise at Sam.

Sam paled and looked the other way to avoid his father's eye.

Fortunately for him, just at that time an officer came in to take him before one of the court judges. His father accompanied him and furnished the bail that was required, which was merely nominal, on account of the evidence all being in Sam's favor.

Every member of the Merry Ten gathered around him and tendered him their congratulations. They took forcible possession of him, and carried him in triumph back to their clubhouse, whither they were followed by the elder Jenkins and his daughter.

It was Nellie's first visit to the clubrooms, and she took a deep interest in everything that she saw.

"Nicodemus," whispered Charlie Pelton to the colored waiter, and general mixer of drinks, "if you let that young lady, Miss Jenkins, get a peep at your bar downstairs, I will murder you!"

"Yes, sah, I understand," said the colored gentleman, and he showed a row of ivory that would have frightened a live pig.

"When they call for drinks, make two straight lemonades for Sam and I—and the same for the lady and her father, of course."

"Yes, sah!"

"Let everybody join us—what will you have, Mr. Jenkins?"

"Ahem—I will—ah—take a glass of lemonade."

"And you, Miss Jenkins, you will——"

"Take what father does," she quietly replied.

Sam and Charlie both took lemonade, while every other member of the club took champagne straight. In due time Nicodemus brought on the bottles and glasses, and the corks were drawn.

Nellie felt happy in seeing Sam and Charlie both call for lemonade instead of wine, as she could see that they had acquired courage, as she thought, to say no in response to their boon companions. On the other hand, the members all thought that Sam and Charlie were drinking the "Merry Ten Flipper," which would make one drunk quicker than even straight champagne.

Several songs were sung, and then the party broke up, Charlie Pelton accompanying Sam home, with Nellie on his arm.

On reaching home, the elder Jenkins ordered Sam to meet him in the library within five minutes, as he desired an interview with him.

"Charlie," whispered Sam to his friend, "remember that you loaned me a thousand dollars several days since, if the governor should ask you about it."

"All right, old fellow, and you can have another thousand if you want it."

Thus prepared to face the music, Sam repaired to the library, where he met his father.

"Sam," said his father, "I don't blame you for shooting that man in self-defense. That is a right that belongs to every one; but I want to know where you got that thousand dollars which he stole from you?"

"I borrowed it," replied Sam.

"Who from?"

"Charlie Pelton."

A look of pain came into the old gentleman's face.

"Is it possible, Sam, that you presumed upon his engagement to your sister to borrow money from him?" he asked.

"No, sir. Charlie and I have often borrowed from each other long before he engaged himself to Nellie."

"What did you borrow that money for, Sam?" he finally asked.

"To pay debts with."

"Pay debts?"

"Yes, sir. I owed some half dozen debts that were due, so I borrowed the money from Charlie and paid them. I owe him the money yet, but he doesn't want it for a year."

"How much money have you now?"

"I don't know, sir—some few dollars I believe."

"When that is gone, what will you do, then?"

"I shall take your advice and go into business."

"But when?"

"Just as soon as I can fix upon something that is respectable, solid and profitable."

The elder Jenkins looked at his son with a close, scrutinizing gaze, and thought he detected signs of dissipation about his eyes and face. A look of sadness came over him.

"My son," he said, "I am in much distress on your account. It is true you are now of age, but you are none the less dear to me. I am fearful of the company you keep. I am afraid you have already learned to gamble, and——"

"No, sir, not for money!" interrupted Sam quietly.

"But you will come to that sooner or later, as your associates all play. I have stopped your supply of money in the hope that I would induce you to go into business. But you seem to have no lack of cash for all your wants. Now you see what has come of your club association. You will go through life with the unpleasant thought that a man has died at your hands. Had you listened to your sister when you signed the pledge, and left the club, that killing would never have occurred. Now, I want you to promise me that you will sever your connection with that Merry Ten Club, and then I will pay every dollar of your debts. Will you do that?"

Sam hung his head, and thought for several minutes.

"Is it a bargain?" his father asked.

"I will do so as soon as I enter into business," the son answered, "as to leave it now would occasion a great deal of comment which I wish to avoid."

"I will hold you to that promise, my son," said the father, and they both arose to leave the room together. "But wait; I will give you a check for the money you owe Charlie. Give it to him, and let me know when you need more."

To the surprise of Sam, his father sat down and wrote out a check, payable to Charlie's order, for one thousand dollars, and handed it to him.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE JEWELRY BOX AGAIN.

On leaving his father, Sam went into the parlor, where Charlie was talking to Nellie.

"Come up to my room, Charlie," he said. "I won't keep you long. Don't get jealous, Nell, as it's only a little private business that we wish to settle between us."

Nellie laughed.

"I'll return in just three minutes, dear," and he darted out of the room, following Sam up two flights of stairs.

"By George, I played that game well," said Sam, laughing and showing him the check which his father had given him. "I told him I had borrowed a thousand dollars from you, and he gave me this check, payable to your order."

Charlie laughed heartily, and took the check.

"I will get it cashed and hand you the money," he said. "It's a good joke on the old gentleman; but don't let Nellie know anything about it."

"Oh, no! She'll never appreciate the strategy that brought it about."

"Is this what you wanted to see me about?"

"Yes; you can go back to Nelile now. Give her my respects, and tell her she can always trust you with me."

"Where are you going?"

"Out for a walk. Come, go with me."

"Not now. Business before pleasure." and Charlie laughed in high glee.

"Business, eh?" said Sam. "Well, I guess you like the business, or you wouldn't stick so close to it."

Sam went out, leaving Charile to pay court to the lovely Nellie, whom he loved dearly, notwithstanding the lemonade deception he was playing upon her.

Two or three hours he spent on Broadway, enjoying the sights to be seen there any pleasant afternoon. Suddenly he came across Harry Wilson.

"Hallo, Sam!" he exclaimed, in evident excitement. "Have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"The arrest of Simcoe Layton and Arthur DeForrest."

"The deuce! What were they arrested for?"

"Two detectives arrested them on information found in the diary which Cerberus had among his effects, in which he accuses them of certain crimes, with some kind of proofs which I don't know anything about. It is whispered that he has written something in it about you, and—— Good heavens, man, what ails you? Are you ill?"

Sam staggered like a drunken man, ashen-hued and speechless for a minute or so. Harry caught him by the arm, and held him steady.

"I am all right now," he said, in a husky tone of voice. "Sudden news that's exciting serves me so."

"Take a glass of wine. It will do you good."

"No, I'll go home. I had hoped I would have no more trouble about Cerberus."

"By heavens!" muttered Sam, as soon as he was alone. "That rascal has written something that may cause my room to be searched. I must go home and get that box out of the way. Heavens, what a volcano I am standing over."

He hastened back home as fast as he could walk, and passed directly up to his room. There he opened his trunk and took out the box which he had taken from Martha Perigorde on the night of that terrible tragedy. He wrapped it in a half dozen newspapers, and then started out of the room with it. A sudden thought came into his mind, and he went to the bureau, opened the top drawer, and took therefrom a false beard which corresponded admirably with his mustache. He had frequently used the beard to create fun among his associates. He put it on, and then took up the box and left the house.

He hurried away, taking a street car downtown.

Getting off near the post office, he went into a store, and purchased a leather valise large enough to hold the box.

Paying for the article, and putting the box therein, he went out upon the street again.

Where to go or what to do he knew not. Finally, he went to the Astor House, registered as "Samuel Jenckes, Ohio," and took a room.

"Make a good fire in the room," he ordered.

The fire was made, and Sam went to the room, locked and bolted the door. To open the valise, take out the box and pour out its contents into the valise was but the work of a moment. He then cast the empty jewelry case into the fire, and saw it reduced to ashes.

"So far, so good," he muttered, and then, with the aid of his knife, he picked every diamond from its setting, leaving the gold in a little pile on the table.

"I'll throw the gold into the street. It will never be recognized as coming from the room or from my hands."

Slightly raising the window, he threw the pieces of gold out into the crowded street, one by one, and then closed it again.

Locking the door, and taking the key with him, he went downstairs. Before leaving the room he destroyed the false beard, and stood again in his personal identity, in which character he went out and took an uptown car.

On reaching home, he was about to apply his night key to the door, when a man ran up the stps, and asked:

"Are you Mr. Sam Jenkins?"

"Yes, that's my name," he replied.

"Then you are my prisoner, sir."

"On what grounds, if I may ask?"

"This," and he showed the badge of a detective, as he was joined by another man.

"But what am I charged with?"

"That you will know in good time. Do you surrender?"

"Of course, for I've done nothing I am ashamed of."

"Very well. Now lead the way to your room, please."

"Certainly, sir," and Sam applied the key and opened the door.

Nellie met them in the hall.

"Oh, brother!" she cried, running forward and throwing her arms about his neck, "those two men came here two hours ago to arrest you. What have you done?"

"Nothing—absolutely nothing, Nellie, dear; do not be alarmed. They wish to search my room, I presume—so come along with us."

Nellie went upstairs with them, and sure enough, a vigorous search was made. His trunk, drawers and every pocket were searched, but nothing was found that gave any satisfaction to the two detectives. They searched him from head to foot.

"Nothing—absolutely nothing," said one detective to the other.

"Very well, then, you are my prisoners," and Sam very quietly drew a revolver, which they had left with him, and cocked it.

"What do you mean, sir?" one of them asked, in surprise.

"I mean that you are my prisoners. You have searched my room without cause. Now you will go with me to the police headquarters, or shall I call assistance?"

"Look here, young man," said the elder of the two detectives, "you go slow now," and leaning forward he whispered something in his ear which Nellie could not catch. But she saw Sam turn ashen-hued, and stagger back against the wall, gasping out, wildly:

"'Tis false—false as Hades!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE TOILS AGAIN.

"Brother—brother!" cried Nellie, rushing to his side. "What is it? Tell me, brother."

"No, no! It's false! Take it back, or you shall die the death of a dog." and pushing Nelile aside, he rushed upon the detective and pressed the muzzle of his revolver against his breast.

"Would you kill me and be hung just because I accused you of killing another?" coolly asked the detective, looking blandly in his face.

Sam glared fiercely at him.

"I am reckless—retract or die!"

"Well, as it is much more pleasant to retract than to die, I will retract," said the detective.

"Now, leave my room, both of you!"

Nellie, in her great excitement, had opened the window for air. She saw two policemen across the street. She darted out of the room, flew down the stairs, and opened the front door.

"Police—police!" she screamed, and the two knights of the locust ran across the street to the house.

"Arrest these two men!" cried Sam, from the top of the first flight of stairs.

"Hands off!" said one of them, showing his badge, and the policeman instantly released him.

"I guess we had better all go to the stationhouse and have this matter settled," said one of the police.

"Yes, that's right. Take 'em along. I'll go with you."

They all five went to the stationhouse, where it turned out that they were really genuine detectives, who, acting on the hint they had received from the mysterious diary of Cerberus, had arrested Sam, thinking they would find positive proof among his effects.

Sam at once instituted a suit for damages, retaining a distinguished member of the bar to conduct his case.

Night came on, and Sam concluded to go back to the Astor House to see if his effects there had been tampered with. On the way down, he met Charlie Pelton, who told him that Arthur DeForrest had committed suicide after being arrested, and for the sake of his family and friends, the charge against him had been suppressed.

Sam found that his valise had not been touched by any one, and felt greatly relieved.

That night he took a carriage and drove to Layton's residence in search of Simcoe, but Sim had left to go downtown.

Sam dismissed the carriage and walked toward the clubhouse. Layton was there.

"I have been up to see you, but you were out," Sam remarked as he shook hands with his friend. "I wanted to see you."

"What's up now?"

"I want to propose that you and I go to Europe for a year. The occurrences of the last few days have made it

very uncomfortable for me, and I doubt not it is the same with you."

"Yes, very uncomfortable. There seems to be a shadow hanging over me, go where I will. When do you propose to go?"

"In ten days."

"I will be ready by that time, but how much money will we need for the trip?"

"I don't know. I will arrange for a good supply before we start, however."

Then they sat down to cards and played several hours. Sam, and nearly every member of the club present, as well as several visitors, drank deeply of the famous lemonade, now well known as the Merry Ten Flipper, until he was very much intoxicated. As the hour of midnight came and passed, the visitors went away, leaving the Merry Ten to continue their revelry. Suddenly a terrific storm came up and swept over the city with tremendous fury. The wind howled like so many demons, shaking windows and doors as if anxious to break in. The games lagged, and members who could not go out in the storm, leaned back in their easy chairs, smoked, talked and dozed.

Sam, who was full of the famous Flipper decoction, sat still, as if asleep, his head leaning back against the high-backed chair. Suddenly he sprang to his feet with a howl of terror, his hair on end, eyes protruding, glaring at something which seemed to pass before him.

"There! There!" he screamed, pointing around the room. "Look! There she goes, with the blood-stained clothes! No, no! Not me! Not me Off—off, spirit of h——ll! Off, I say," and seizing a chair, he hurled it across the room with such terrific force as to utterly demolish it against the wall of the room. The next moment Simcoe Layton sprang up and screamed with terror. But instead of showing fight, he buried his face in his hands and sunk down in his seat again.

Charlie Pelton, and some of the half dozen others sprang upon Sam and secured him from doing any further damage.

The storm raged all night, so several had to remain at the clubhouse, among them Pelton and Sam, both the worse for what they had drank. But when morning came they were sober enough to go to barber shops to bathe and otherwise get rid of the appearance of having gone through an all night's debauch.

The ten days passed, and the time came for Sam and Layton to take leave of their friends. Nobody but a few friends outside the club knew that they were going to Europe. The elder Jenkins had agreed to pay Sam's expenses in order to have him cut loose from the Merry Ten Club.

Sam bid them adieu at home, and took the carriage for the clubhouse, where he was to meet Layton and a number of friends before going on board the steamer.

They met and drove to the pier.

Just as Simcoe alighted from the carriage a tall man stepped forward, and said:

"Once more before you go, Simcoe Layton."

"Yes; with the greatest of pleasure," exclaimed Layton, and the next moment two bright, glittering blades flashed and crossed each other in the gaslight. The hour was so late that there were no persons about, save a few on the deck of the steamer. The astonished driver looked on in petrified amazement.

"Stop this—off with that mask, you cow——"

"You keep still!" hissed some one behind him, and Sam looked around him to find another man in a mask leveling a pistol at his head.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MASKED MAN AGAIN AND THE DOUBLE TRAGEDY.

Sam had his pistol in his hand, and believing that the man in the mask intended to fire, he quickly raised his weapon and fired full at the mask.

The man staggered back, and let his pistol fall to the ground. Sam snapped a cap at him, and then the man, with a bitter curse on his lips, turned and fled away in the darkness.

The shot caused Simcoe Layton to spring aside, thinking that he was attacked from behind.

That move was a fatal one to him.

The mask sprang forward and plunged his knife to the hilt in Layton's breast, who staggered away like a drunken man. Crack! went Sam's revolver, and the man leaped forward, reeled a moment, and then gathered himself for another start.

Crack! went another shot, and the man in the mask gave a groan as he sank to the ground.

"Now, we'll see who and what you are!" said Sam, putting up his weapon and advancing toward the mysterious individual.

Just then two policemen and several persons from the steamer came running up.

"Two dead men and one live one," said the policeman. "I'll take you in, sir."

"Very well," said Sam, "only I wish you had come earlier."

The driver then told the whole story of the attack and the killing.

The two dead bodies were taken up and carried away—the masked one to the morgue, for identification, and young Layton's to the residence of his father. Sam was carried to the stationhouse and locked up for the night.

In less than an hour Charlie walked into the room with:

"Sam, what the devil does all this mean?"

"It means that poor Sim is dead," said Sam, with tears in his eyes, "and I am here for killing the man in the mask, who has been shadowing him so long."

"Where did this happen?"

"Just as we alighted from the carriage to go to the steamer, two masked men followed us. I opened fire on one of them, who ran away. The other stabbed Sim, and started to run, when I brought him down."

"You had a witness in the driver, did you not?"

"Yes, and he has told a story to the officers that tallies exactly with my own."

"Then you are safe, so far as the law is concerned."

"Yes, but I want you to go down to the steamer, get my baggage, and send my trunk home, and my valise carry to your own room to keep until I call for it. Let no one touch it."

"Certainly I will do that, only you must give me an order for the baggage, you know."

"Get me paper, pen and ink, and I will write it."

Charlie left the room, and soon returned with writing material, which he had laid on the little deal table before him. Charlie took the order and left.

He went to the steamer and presented the order.

The clerk told him that the baggage would be delivered early on the morrow.

He then went away to visit the home of poor Simcoe Layton. He found the family plunged into the wildest excess of grief over the death of the only son of the household.

The grief-stricken father came forward and shook him by the hand, saying:

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Pelton, as my son loved you as a brother. But I shall never believe otherwise than that my poor boy's death resulted, indirectly, from his connection with that Merry Ten club."

"I am sure you think so, sir," said Charlie, "for I am sure every member was his friend, and would have fought for him as Sam Jenkins did to-night."

Charlie retired to his bachelor apartments and snatched a few hours of sleep.

The Jenkins family had been awakened just before daylight, and informed that Sam was in the stationhouse for killing the man who slew Simcoe Layton. The elder Jenkins at once repaired to the residence of the Laytons, and there learned the true story.

"Thank heavens, my boy is not to blame for this!" fervently muttered the old man, "though it seems that some fatal shadow has fallen across his path. This is the second man he has been compelled to slay in the last month. I can trace the cause to no other course than the associations that have grown out of that social club."

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

At an early hour the next morning Charlie Pelton took a carriage and went down to the steamer to get Sam's trunk and valise.

To his supreme astonishment he found two detectives

there, who seized the baggage as soon as it was placed on the dock.

"What does this mean?" he asked, indignantly.

"It means that this baggage will be searched before you get it," replied the detective.

"Why do you wish to search it?"

"We are looking for something that will give us certain clues."

"Well, I can't help myself, of course. When will you be through searching the baggage?"

"We will take it to the Central station and make the search there."

"Very well—you will let me go with you?"

"Yes; but I don't know that you will be permitted to witness the search."

"You will not give my friend any show at all, then."

"I don't know what they will do yet. Come on."

They drove to the Central police station, where the trunk was searched by an expert in such business.

Charlie was permitted to stand by and see it.

Nothing was found in his trunk to create suspicion.

"Now, look into the valise," said the chief of the detective force.

The little bunch of skeleton keys were tried until one was found that would unlock the valise.

In it were many little toilet articles such as a refined man would carry on his travels.

In the bottom was found a number of unset stones and packages of greenbacks.

Charlie Pelton glanced at it and buried his face in his hands and groaned.

"What do you know about this, sir?" the chief of detectives asked, as he took up the rare diamonds, pearls and money, and looked at Charlie.

"Nothing whatever, sir. I am dumfounded, but can't believe that my friend and classmate is guilty of any crime."

"This is very good proof of guilt. We have suspected Mr. Jenkins ever since that man Cerberus left his diary behind him. It is all up with your friend, sir."

Charlie Pelton hung his head and wept, for he grieved for Sam, for Nellie, and himself.

"Oh, it will kill her!" he moaned, in the deepest anguish. "My heavens! It is awful! But then I know that Sam can explain this away—he is not—cannot be a murderer."

Charlie went away, and tried to see Sam to tell him, but was not allowed to see him.

John Perigorde was sent for. He identified the diamonds, etc., and the bills of those belonging to himself and wife.

He broke down and wept like a child, for his good name was saved, and the murderer would be brought to justice.

The news spread like wildfire, and ere Sam himself had heard of it, his family had been made acquainted with the facts.

Nellie and her mother fainted dead away, and the father swore that the whole thing was false.

Sam was searched, and everything taken from him. He was then loaded down with chains, and told that he was the murderer of Martha Perigorde.

"That's a lie!" said Sam, "but I see how it is," his quick wit coming to his aid. "We caught the murderer and made him give up his booty, letting him go free on condition that he let us have the money and jewels."

"Who was the murderer?"

"One of those masked men that we killed last night."

But it was proved at the trial that the mysterious masked man who had followed Simcoe Layton with such fatal pertinacity, was a relative of poor Adele Heron, who had sworn to avenge her wrongs with his own hands. He kept his oath at the sacrifice of his life.

The great wealth of the elder Jenkins enabled Sam to employ the best legal talent in the country, and so hotly did they contest the charge of murder, that the jury brought in a verdict of murder in the second degree.

He was sentenced to fifteen years in the penitentiary.

It was a terrible blow to the family.

Nellie bore it bravely—taking leave from him only as a true sister would have done.

Going to her desolate home, she wrote to Charlie Pelton:

"My heart is broken—for in losing a brother I have lost more than a brother—my heart's idol. You will not wish to wed the sister of a convict—therefore, I release you from your engagement to me. May you ever be as happy as I am now miserable. Your ever faithful,

"Nellie."

This she sealed and mailed.

The next morning Charlie Pelton called at the home of the Jenkins.

"Nellie," he said, as the pale and trembling girl approached him, "you are still my own—my heart will not give you up. I will marry you in spite of all the ills that could befall you."

With a glad cry, she sprang into his arms.

They were married the next month, and are now in their beautiful home in the West.

The Merry Ten club disbanded, for the dark shadows that overhung it could not be endured. It is now a thing of the past. Some of its members are in distant lands. But poor Sam Jenkins, as he toils in his prison, never ceases to ponder on the shadows of a social club.

Next week's issue will contain "DAN DRIVER, THE BOY ENGINEER OF THE MOUNTAIN EXPRESS; OR, RAILROADING ON THE DENVER AND RIO GRANDE."

SPECIAL NOTICE

Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your weekly copy of "PLUCK AND LUCK." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this weekly every week, so they will know how many copies to order from us.

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HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

THE FOURTH LIBERTY LOAN.

The campaign for the Fourth Liberty Loan begins September 28 and closes October 19. While the amount has not yet been announced, it is generally conceded it will be for a larger amount than any of the preceding loans. The American people, therefore, are called upon to raise a larger sum of money in a shorter length of time than ever before. There is need, therefore, for prompt action—prompt and efficient work and prompt and liberal subscriptions.

We have a great inspiration for a great effort. The news from the battle front inspires every American heart, not only with pride and patriotism, but with a great incentive to do his or her part. There is no shirking, no shifting of the individual burden, no selfishness by American soldiers in France; there should be none here. We are both supporting the same country and the same cause—our Army in one way, ourselves in another. Theirs is the harder part, but at least we can do our part as promptly and loyally and efficiently as they do theirs.

OUR EXPORTATION OF SILVER.

The melting down of the silver dollars in the United States Treasury and the exportation of the bar silver resulting and other silver bullion possess great interest to the average American citizen.

Most of this silver bullion is sent to India, whose people have a strong prejudice in favor of metal money, and India is exporting a vast amount of material used in the war by England and France, and, in fact, all the entente allies, including ourselves.

To pay for these goods in the money desired by the people of India caused a tremendous drain on the supply of silver of entente allies, and to meet this urgent demand the United States has taken the great amount of silver bullion and silver dollars lying idle in its Treasury and is exporting it to India to be used in paying for war supplies. Something like a hundred million silver dollars have been melted down and exported.

What great assistance it was to the allies, including the United States, is shown by the statement Sir James Meston, financial member of the Viceroy's Council, who is reported as saying:

"Probably few people in America realize how vitally important to India and to India's share in the war was the legislation passed in Washington releasing large quantities of silver for use in alleviating the currency situation there. For this action India as well as the British Empire and the allies owe a debt of gratitude to the United States which it is hard to overstate.

LARGE GARBAGE SAVING.

Sufficient grease was recovered from household garbage collected during the month of May from eleven American cities to make the explosive charge for more than half a million 75 mm. shells, besides millions of pounds of soap and other products, according to figures just issued by the United States Food Administration. The garbage grease was sufficient to produce 129,040 pounds of glycerine, from which nitroglycerine is made, and for which there is a big demand at this time.

The figures indicate an increase in the amount of grease recovered over the same period last year, particularly in Chicago, which showed an increase well over 200 per cent. The entire amount of grease recovered is an increase of 43 per cent. over May, 1917. The returns are from eleven cities, having a total population of over 6,000,000.

Since the campaign for garbage utilization has been urged by the Food Administration there has been an appreciable increase in the amount of garbage collected for reduction. This does not indicate that there are more foodstuffs being wasted, but that the cities are making a more earnest effort to collect all available garbage, instead of permitting it to be burned, dumped, or otherwise not utilized. A number of cities which have been wasting garbage have taken steps to install reduction plants, so that the valuable materials contained in table and kitchen refuse can be recovered.

LOANS TO FARMERS.

The War Finance Corporation of the Treasury Department will make loans, in exceptional cases, directly and without the intervention of banks, to live-stock raisers, whose industry has been classified as one necessary or contributory to the prosecution of the war.

These loans are to be made under section 9 of the War Finance Corporation act, and the loans will be made to individuals, firms, and corporations whose principal business is the raising of live stock, which includes cattle, goats, sheep, and hogs.

For the present only the Federal Reserve banks of Kansas City and Dallas are designated as agencies to execute these loans, which are to be made to live-stock raisers who are experiencing great difficulty in their operations owing to drought conditions, though cattlemen from other districts are not excluded from the benefit of section 9.

The War Finance Corporation has also effected an arrangement for extending financial assistance to the canners of New York State.

CURRENT NEWS

DESTROYS GERMAN SCISSORS.

Horace F. Campbell, a druggist and president of the Clinton County Council, proved himself 100 per cent American when he hammered his pair of scissors to pieces after he had discovered the trade mark on them read "Made in Germany." Campbell had carried this particular pair of scissors for many years and only recently discovered the German mark.

CARRIER PIGEON MYSTERY.

The authorities in Albany, Ore., and everywhere else are trying to decipher this message:

"P-n-7-3-a-r-ll-w."

It was written on a piece of notepaper brought here by a strange carrier pigeon, which died very soon after it was found on the street.

The bird was identified as a species of California desert quail, not found in any part of Oregon save possibly in the southeastern portion. The bird refused food and water and was exhausted.

A piece of string which bound the message to the bird's leg was olive drab in color and might have been unravelled from an army uniform.

BAGDAD ROWBOATS LIKE BOWLS.

The goufas of the Tigris are wonderful! And I suppose they should remind me of something besides the "three wise men of Gotham who went to sea in a tub," writes Eleanor Franklin Eagan in the *Saturday Evening Post.* That is exactly what they remind one of. They are perfectly round reed baskets, "pitched within and without with pitch." They have curved-in brims and they look for all the world like enormous black bowls floating uncertainly about.

They are the only kind of rowboat the Bagdad people seem to know anything about, and the river at times is literally crowded with them. They roll around among the larger and more possible looking craft like a thousand huge inverted tar bubbles; and the way they are laden is a marvel and a mystery.

Many of them ply back and forth as ferryboats, and it is not at all unusual to see one of them carrying two donkeys, half a dozen sheep, a dozen people and somebody's entire stock of earthly belongings in bundles and bales. They are most pleasing to the eyes when they are carrying reeds from the marshes up river. The reeds are cut with their feathery blooms still on and are packed in a goufa in upright sheaves, the effect being a gigantic imitation of a Scotch thistle, out of the top of which, as often as not, protrude the turbaned head and brightly-hooded shoulders of an Arab passenger. The men who propel the amazing craft squeeze themselves in under its curving brim and wield long paddles and poles with a skill that nothing could surpass.

BOYS KNIT QUILT.

That knitting is a good sport and not a bit girly has been proved by the boys of the Breck School, Falls of Schuylkill, Pa. As a result an all-wool, bright-hued quilt of many colors is the prized possession of the surgical ward of the Naval Hospital, Gray's Ferry road. The quilt is the composite work of the thirty-four pupils of grade 5B, which numbers nineteen girls and fifteen boys, all between the ages of ten and twelve.

"And the boys were every bit as deeply interested as the girls in the knitting," testified Miss Marion Nuneviller, teacher of grade 5B. "Several of them contributed no less than five squares apiece, devoting their evening and recess hour to the work."

The quilt is two yards wide, laid in 110 multi-hued squares, stitched together with infinite care. Into two of the squares are worked the words "Breck School." It was first sent by the young patriots "to the sick sailors," through Mrs. E. T. Stotesbury, and despatched by her to the Naval Hospital, where Sergt. George Pickerel, medical director, promptly detailed it to the use of the crippled boys in the surgical ward.

CULTIVATING SPIDERS.

The cultivation of certain species of spiders, solely for the fine threads which they weave for scientific uses has an important bearing upon astronomy. No substitute for the spider's thread has yet been found for bisecting the screw of the micrometer and motions of the stars. Not only because of the remarkable fineness of the threads are they valuable, but because of their durable qualities. The threads of certain spiders raised for astronomical purposes withstand changes in temperature, so that often in measuring sun spots they are uninjured when the heat is so great that the lenses of the micrometer eyepiece are cracked. These spider lines are only one-fifth to one-seventh of a thousandth of an inch in diameter, compared with which the threads of the silkworm are large and clumsy. Each line is made up of several thousands of microscopic streams of fluid. Under the most powerful magnifying glass they appear true and round. The work of placing these lines in the micrometer requires the delicate touch of experts, who operate with the aid of microscopes which magnify the line a thousand times. The lines are placed parallel with one another and two one-thousandths of an inch apart.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

SEARCHING FOR PURSE FINDS SON.

Searching for a pocketbook containing $160, which he lost one morning, L. T. Roth of St. Cloud, Minn., met on the streets in Racine, Wis., his son Robert, whom the father believed had been killed while in France. The son, having been injured, was given leave of absence to visit the United States and had stopped in Racine on his way to St. Cloud to visit his father.

DOUBLE EGGS LIKE CARTRIDGES.

David Mooreland, who lives in the southern part of Muncie, Ind., has the prize-laying war hens, he says. From three hens he has averaged nineteen eggs a week since Christmas, which is so nearly one a day for each hen that it makes little difference. One of these three recently has been outdoing herself by laying elongated eggs in the shape of cartridges. These eggs are about three inches long and contain two whites and two yolks each.

GERMANS COMBING OUT MEN.

The German Government has summoned every available man to the colors, says a letter just received here from a newspaper correspondent in Germany.

Of the 200,000 workmen at Krupps between 30,000 and 40,000 have been called up for service at the front. Elsewhere, the correspondent adds, the comb out has been even more vigorous.

$5,000 TURKISH BATH THEFT.

The safe in a Turkish bath establishment in New York was broken open early the other morning and robbed of $2,000 in cash and $3,000 in jewelry while the proprietor, Samuel Yagoda, took a forty-five minute nap. The property belonged to 150 patrons who were in the place at the time.

Yagoda fell asleep at 4 o'clock. When he awakened and went to his office he found a bunch of keys which were in his pocket when he dozed off sticking in the keyhole. He opened the door hurriedly and found that the safe had been broken open and scores of empty envelopes, in which the valuables of his patrons had been placed for safe keeping, strewn about the floor.

HIGH FLIGHTS OF EAGLES.

There are two animals that puzzle naturalists more than any others. They are man's submarine and aeroplane, the whale and the eagle. It is known that whales occasionally descend as much as 3,000 feet below the surface of the sea—a depth at which by the pressure of the water, they ought to be crushed flat. Why they are not injured scientists have yet to discover. It is this pressure which prevents a modern submarine descending even 300 feet, let alone 3,000.

Eagles have been seen through telescopes to fly with apparent ease from 30,000 to 40,000 feet above sea level. At that height no human being can live, owing to the rarefaction of the air. How the birds live and fly at far greater heights than man can endure for long is a question still to be answered.

UNLAWFUL TO REPRODUCE WAR SAVINGS SECURITIES.

The National War Savings Committee issues the following:

The reproduction of war-savings securities either in whole or in part is forbidden by the statute covering the prohibition of the reproduction of Government securities. This matter has been before the Chief of the Secret Service at various times, and his rulings have been consistently clear on this subject. The law reads:

"The words 'obligation of other security of the United States' shall be held to mean all bonds, certificates of indebtedness, national bank currency, coupons, United States notes, Treasury notes, gold certificates, silver certificates, fractional notes, certificates of deposit, bills, checks, or drafts for money, drawn by or upon authorized officers of the United States, stamps and others representatives of value of whatever denomination which have been or may be issued under any act of Congress."

"* * * Whoever shall print, photograph, or in any other manner make or execute or cause to be printed, photographed, made, or executed, or shall aid in printing, photographing, making, or executing any engraving, photograph, print, or impression in the likeness of any such obligation or other security, or any part thereof, or shall sell any such engraving, photograph, print, or impression, except to the United States, or shall bring into the United States or any place subject to the jurisdiction thereof, from any foreign place, any such engraving, photograph, print, or impression, except by direction of some proper officer of the United States; or whoever shall have or retain in his control or possession, after a distinctive paper has been adopted by the Secretary of the Treasury for the obligations and other securities of the United States, any similar paper adapted to the making of any such obligation, or other security, except under the authority of the Secretary of the Treasury or some other proper officer of the United States, shall be fined not more than $5,000, or imprisoned not more than fifteen years, or both."

SENT ON THE ROAD

—OR—

A SMART BOY IN BUSINESS

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A serial story)

CHAPTER XVII (Continued).

"I'm sure I'm thankful for it," said Walter, who was hurriedly dressing. "But what brought you out here, Tom? You haven't explained that yet."

"Well, it was partly because I wanted to see you, Walt, and talk business and this money affair with you personally. Then I have never been much outside of New York, and I wanted to see what the world was like, and last, it was these letters, which you will read."

All were addressed to the company. One was from St. Paul, the next in point of date from Milwaukee, and the third from Chicago.

They read as follows. We give them in the order of their dates:

"Can you give me the present address of your Mr. Webster? I was in the recent wreck on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, and I have been informed that he lost a grip there and found another, which I have reason to believe belongs to me. Address J. C. Spalding, Plankington House, Milwaukee, Wis."

"That wasn't answered," said Tom. "I gave it to Fred Havey to attend to, and it was overlooked."

The next was dated at the Plankington House.

"I find no letter in answer to mine of recent date. I want you to understand that in my grip was a large sum of money. You can inform your Mr. Webster that if I do not hear from him in answer to the letter I wrote him at Denver I shall place the matter in the hands of detectives, and have him arrested. You may address me at the Sherman House, Chicago.—J. C. Spalding."

"Did you answer that?" inquired Walter.

"I did. I gave him your date here in St. Paul. I told him that we had every confidence in you, and that if he would call on you and prove property he would undoubtedly get his money. But read the other letter, which must have been written before he received mine."

And Walter read:

"You seem determined to ignore my letters. I am going back to St. Paul, and shall be in Minneapolis on Friday next. You can inform your man Webster that detectives are on his track, and that if he don't communicate with me at 88 Bassford street, Minneapolis, by that day, he will be arrested. I shan't fool with this matter any longer. He has stolen my money, and I intend to get it back.—J. C. Spaulding."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WALTER FALLS IN WITH THE FORDS AGAIN.

"There, what do you think of all that, Walt?" demanded Tom.

"I think what I have thought right along," replied Walter, "and that is that this man Spalding is a fraud, and that his real name is Jack Floyd."

"Who is Jack Floyd?"

Walter explained.

"By Jove, I believe you are right!" cried Tom. "I didn't want to see you get into trouble, so I concluded to take a run out and see about this business. You wrote to Spalding?"

"I did, and gave him my Denver address. Mr. Williston promised to forward any letter which came from him."

"And you have received none?"

"No."

"Where did you address him?"

"Nicolet House, Minneapolis."

"This is Thursday. To-morrow is the day he sets."

"Yes."

"Have you any reason to believe that detectives have been shadowing you?"

"None whatever. I don't believe it."

"It's early yet. Suppose we take a run up to Minneapolis and see what they know of Spaulding at the Nicolet House?"

"I'm willing, but I have had no supper."

"'Twon't take long to get it. I had mine on the train."

"Oh, I'll go if you say so, Tom."

"Just for the fun of the thing. We'll take up business in the morning. I think we better get a new agent here."

This was the beginning of a lot of business talk which need not be recorded.

The boys went to the dining-room, and supper was ordered, Tom feeling that he could "go another bite."

While they were talking a gentleman stepped up to them.

Walter did not observe him until he was right at his side.

It was Mr. Ford.

The millionaire was very cordial.

He sat down and talked a few minutes with the boys; he had just finished supper himself.

"Yes, Lilly and I are up here," he said. "I have interests in a large packing plant in Minneapolis. Lilly is up there to-day visiting a friend, and I presume she will stay all night. How have you been making out on the road?"

"You had better ask Mr. Bagley that question," replied Walter. "He is my employer."

"He could scarcely have done better," said Tom. "I am perfectly satisfied with his work."

(To be continued.)

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

A NEW POSTAL LAW.

A section was added to the postal laws some months ago which provides that "any postal employee who has served in the military service of the United States, or who shall hereafter enter it, shall, upon being honorably discharged therefrom, be permitted to resume the position in the postal department which he left to enter the military service.

AMBULANCE AIRPLANES.

Following the successful operation of the first ambulance plane at Gerstner Field, Lake Charles, La., General Kenly, commanding the Division of Military Aeronautics, has had all flying commanding officers supplied with photographs and drawings of this new emergency air carrier, with orders to complete the equipment at once. The nine Texas fields have already finished their equipment. The airplane ambulance is used in reaching scenes of accidents occurring at a distance from the flying field hospitals and in localities difficult to reach quickly with automobile ambulances. It is in turn followed by an automobile ambulance by road or overland as fast as is possible. A standard training plane is used for the new airplane ambulance with the rear cockpit cleared and enlarged sufficiently to permit of a combination stretcher seat that allows the injured man to rest easily. The real value of the plane is its speed, but it also assures a far more gentle and comfortable trip than is to be had in an automobile ambulance.

CAMOUFLAGED ROADS OF THE WAR.

Surprise is still a predominant weapon of war, just as it has been in every war since the dawn of history. The most successful attacks in this war have been those prepared without the knowledge of the enemy, as witness the battle of the Masurian Lakes in the east when Hindenburg's German troops fell suddenly on the erstwhile victoriously advancing Russians and routed them completely, as well as the recent Von Hutier's strokes on the western front and Foch's counterblow against the Crown Prince's armies in the Marne salient. A dozen other examples of the strategic value of surprise could be cited, for proof is not missing in this connection, says the Scientific American.

One of the most interesting phases of surprise in modern military operations is the bringing up of large masses of troops and guns and supplies without the knowledge of the enemy. Von Hutier, as well be remembered from the article recently appearing in these columns, which dealt at length with the methods of that skilled German general, lays great stress on secrecy. He places his principal armies as far as 60 miles behind the front lines until the very eve of the battle, when they are brought up by forced marches at night. During the day the troops are concealed in villages and in woods; in fact, wherever ample covering can be found for the purpose. Enemy airmen, flying far into German-held land, discover no signs of extensive troop movements. When the battle opens the enemy, as was the case with the British during March and the French during May, are taken by surprise, not so much as regards the date set for the battle, but largely with respect to the numbers of troops involved.

Rumors have come back from France telling of the marvelous camouflaged roads employed by the Germans during their last ill-fated offensive in the Marne salient. These roads, it is said, are important, but not necessarily the main, arteries of travel for troops and supplies, and are covered over with mile after mile of canvas painted to represent the original road. Thus to an airman flying at thousands of feet altitude such as he must do in order to keep a respectable distance between himself and the enemy anti-aircraft guns, the camouflaged road appears absolutely deserted, while all the while thousands of troops, batteries of artillery, and supply wagons may be moving along steadily toward the battlefront. The road can be readily camouflaged in this manner, albeit the amount of canvas required is considerable and the work of erection quite extensive. Still, the value of a camouflaged road cannot be overestimated, and it is obvious that no commander would hesitate to employ his camouflage corps in such a way.

It is said of the British camouflcurs that during the preparations for the great battle of the Somme, in 1916, they constructed a similar road. The occasional German airman over the British back areas perceived little activity on the ground. The most important road, to be sure, was deserted except for an occasional cart, a few soldiers and a fake gun or two. But all the while British Tommies were pouring to the battlefront, with their guns and supplies, under the camouflaged canvas. So taut and so well supported was the canvas that it was possible to send light traffic along the camouflage canvas, thus leading the Germans to believe that the road was genuine, so the rumors go.

Camouflage appears to be without limit in this war. It does not seem unreasonable to look forward to the day when entire armies will move forward without a single man, gun, or supply truck in sight. They will make use of mile after mile of camouflaged roads; and when in the field they will march under woven grass carpets carefully painted to match the surrounding terrain.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 25, 1918.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

An immense run of Chinook salmon in the Columbia River has made it probable that this season's pack will exceed that of last year, according to reports brought here to-day from lower river points. Canneries are all working at capacity. Earlier it was thought this year's pack would be short.

An indication of the length to which Germany is going for war materials is contained in a letter taken from a dead soldier. It was written by his wife and informed him that the great bronze statue of Emperor William, at Luneberg, Pomerania, had been torn down and sent to the foundry to be converted into ordnance, as had also the roofs of churches. American authorities long have been convinced that the prodigal use of copper by Germany in erecting innumerable statues in which any effort at artistic achievement is noticeably absent, and the roofing of churches and other edifices with the metal when less expensive material would have served as well, has been the Kaiser's way of camouflaging the storage of vast supplies for war purposes.

The longer the world war continues the greater becomes the conflict on the ground and in the air. In the latter sphere the activity has attained unbelievable proportions, as witness the recent British official statement reporting over one hundred and twenty German machines shot down in two days' fighting. The average wastage daily in aerial fighting is as great today as the wastage of a month in the early days of the war. This bit of information offers interesting opportunities to speculate on the production of German aircraft, which by now must be tremendous in order to keep pace with the constant and heavy drain. Indeed, it is an augury of what we should be able to do when our aircraft production facilities are once straightened out and under full headway.

A general order has been issued by Secretary of the Navy Daniels prohibiting the selling or serving of intoxicating liquors to officers or enlisted men of the Navy, in addition to the regulations previously issued covering restricted zones around naval camps and stations. It contains the following provision: "Outside of said zones alcoholic liquor, including beer, ale and wine, either alone or with any other article, shall not, directly or indirectly, be sold, bartered, given, served, or knowingly delivered to any officer or member of the naval forces within the United States, their territories or possessions, or any place under their control, except when administered for medical purposes by or under the direction of a regularly licensed physician or medical officer of the United States.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"Can you tell me, my boy," said the prim teacher, "why the race is not always to the swift?" "Yes'm," said the little boy, promptly. "It's because sometimes their tires bust."

"Do you know that your dog bit my mother-in-law yesterday?" "No; is that so? Well, I suppose you will sue me for damages?" "Not at all. What will you take for the dog?"

"I am strongly inclined to think that your husband has appendicitis," said the physician. "That's just like him," answered Mrs. Cumrox. "He always waits till anything has pretty near gone out of style before he decides to get it."

"I'm afraid your sister doesn't like me much, Tommy," sighed Mr. Spencer to his charmer's little brother. "I think she would if you was to give me a quarter," suggested Tommy. "She's awful fond of me, and always likes people wot's good to me."

A fat man could not help laughing one day at the ludicrous appearance of a very bowlegged chap. Though a total stranger to him, the fat man slapped the bowlegged chap on the back and said: "By jingo, brother, you look as if you'd been ridin' a barrel." The bowlegged man smiled and poked his forefinger deep into the fat man's loose, soft stomach. "And you look as if you'd been swallowin' one," he said.

Two English workmen were discussing the war. "It'll be an awful long job, Sam," said one. "It will," replied the other. "You see, these Germans is takin' thousands and thousands of Russian prisoners, and the Russians is takin' thousands and thousands of German prisoners. If it keeps on, all the Russians will be in Germany and all the Germans in Russia. And then they'll start all over again, fightin' to get back their 'omes."

PEARY'S BOY GUIDE

—OR—

ICEBOUND IN THE ARCTIC

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XVII (Continued).

The pistol shot had brought every one out of the igloo, and Peary shot a glance at the flying sledges and tuned pale.

"Heavens!" he muttered. "They have stolen up and caught us unawares! They have got our sledges! This is terrible!"

A look of deep distress swept over Peary's face, and he watched the rascals until they vanished around some rocks, and then he sighed and said:

"We are in a most serious fix, but if we keep up our courage we may get out of it in time. Anyway, we have a good supply of food and our weapons as well. But the loss of the dogs is a serious drawback to the success of the expedition."

The Esquimaux were now told what had happened, and they burst out with an excited jabber in their own language.

Finally their excitement abated, and Peary said to Jack:

"What do you suggest—stay here a while or start off on foot at once for the camp? A journey back without our dogs means a trip of several weeks. If we remain here long enough our friends will, perhaps, come in search of us. But that means a delay of months."

"Well, Mr. Peary," answered the boy, thoughtfully, "if you want my opinion, I vote to remain here a few days to get well rested and then we can start off with plenty of strength for the trip."

"That settles it. Your sensible suggestion shall be carried out."

"Moreover," added the boy, with a smile, "if I am to judge by what the Esquimaux say, they will make an early effort to trail the sledges, and if they meet with May's party, the rascals are going to get a good thrashing for robbing us."

"Another excellent idea," grimly commented the commander.

They dismissed the matter from their minds for the present, and as all hands felt pretty hungry a good meal was now prepared, and they ate it.

It was the following morning before the Esquimaux started off on the trail of the thieves, headed by Joe, and while they were gone Peary took an observation and made a calculation.

He was able to compute pretty accurately their present situation, and when he had finished he said to Jack:

"We are within one hundred and fifty miles of the Pole."

"About the distance I imagined," replied the boy.

"And you are positive that this water is frozen over at certain times during the year?" continued the explorer.

"Joe and I walked over it while it was frozen, as I told you, sir," answered the boy. "If we wait here until the coldest weather sets in I am sure we can make a dash over the ice which will bring us quite close to the latitude we wish to reach."

"Well," remarked the explorer in satisfied tones. "If I never get any nearer to the Pole than this I shall be satisfied, for we are now at a point much nearer to it than any other explorer has ever gone."

He stood facing the north, and gazed in that coveted direction a long time, letting his fancy carry him far over that dark polar sea, and in imagination he could see himself ultimately reaching the wonderful goal, to reach which so many men before him had striven and perished.

On the following day Esquimau Joe suddenly made his appearance with a broad grin on his yellow, oily face.

"Jack," he roared, excitedly, "we find um!"

"Hello, Joe! You back?" replied the boy.

"Look!" laughed the fat little Esquimau, pointing behind Jack.

The boy turned around and a joyful cry pealed from his lips as his glance fell upon three sledges with their dog teams coming toward the igloos at a run, driven by their men.

"You've saved the sledges?" cried the boy, joyfully.

Just then Peary came out of the nearest igloo, and seeing the dogs racing toward them, he uttered a shout of delight.

"Joe, you are a trump!" he exclaimed. "Where did you find them?"

"Ten miles away."

"Did those white men have them?"

"White man in camp with Esquimaux. Me creep up quick. While sleep me take me sledge an' dog."

"Then they didn't catch you at it?"

"Bimeby wake up an' shoot."

"Ha! Were any of your party hurt?"

"No. We fire arrow, spear an' run way."

"Good! Good! Did they chase you?"

"Sure. But no run fast like dog."

"Well, you did first-rate. Are they following you?"

"Not now. Mebbe come to-morrow an' fight."

"They will find us ready to give them a warm reception if they do."

As the natives had not touched a morsel of food since the previous day, they were given a plentiful supply of it.

Then all hands set to work at building a wall of ice around the huts, to act as a barrier against the invasion of their enemies.

As it afterward transpired, it was lucky for them that they did so, for May's party made their appearance that night.

(To be continued.)

FROM ALL POINTS

U. S. S. LEVIATHAN.

As to the great work of the United States troop transport Leviathan (formerly the German liner Vaterland) in transporting troops across the Atlantic Sir Joseph Maclay, Shipping Controller of Great Britain, in an article in the New York Times, says: "This enormous vessel recently reached a French port with 11,000 men on board. What happened? Those troops, almost equivalent to a whole German division, were disembarked, 4,000 tons of coal were taken on board, and within forty-eight hours the Leviathan was on her way back to the United States."

DOG WOULD BE A SOLDIER.

Buster Newbern, the dog pet of Mrs. J. W. Newbern of Portland, Ore., has made two attempts to join the colors without success. The first attempt was made one Sunday night when the dog picked out the first soldier that passed and followed him to Council Crest. The soldier took the dog to Vancouver Barracks that night and returned him to his mistress the following day.

During the next few days the dog was kept tied, but on Friday was released again. A few minutes afterward a uniformed man passed the house and the dog immediately took up his trail. He was recovered again by his owner Saturday afternoon.

THE MAIL BAG OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO.

Speaking of odd, tucked away corners of the globe and the novel aspects of life they are bound to present to the sophisticated and often pampered regions where humanity congregates most thickly, here is a tale, told by Walter K. Putney in "St. Nicholas Magazine," which will be found interesting:

"How many people know that South America can boast of the simplest postoffice in the world? It would take considerable guessing on the part of the reader to locate this postoffice, for he would find it at the very end of the continent. Even then he might not recognize it.

"Opposite Tierra del Fuego is a very high, rocky cliff overhanging the Strait of Magellan, and from one of the rocks is suspended, by a long chain, a barrel which receives mail. To be sure, there is no postmaster, nor is there any regular letter carrier or collector, but every ship that goes through the strait stops and sends a boat to this curious little postoffice, looks over the letters that are in it to see if there are any for the men on board that particular ship, and places therein letters for seamen on board ships that are known to be headed for the strait.

"Who was the person that first thought of such a scheme we are not told, but the sailors think a great deal of their unique postoffice, and there has never yet, to anybody's knowledge, been any violation of the confidence reposed in it. When a sailor sends a letter to it addressed to another seaman he is absolutely certain of its delivery. It may be that one of the two seamen is on a vessel which is not expected to pass by this ocean postoffice, but the letter may have on it a request that a vessel going east or west shall pick it up and deliver it to some point where the seaman will be sure to receive it. In this manner letters have been known to make their way to the Arctic Ocean, or even to India."

BIRDS HAPPY ON BATTLEFIELD.

Curiously enough the birds whose seasonal migrations take them to northern France and Belgium returned there this year as usual and seemingly unafraid nested, reared their young and sang while the battle raged about them. A member of a Canadian Highland regiment wrote home:

"As morning was dawning the colonel led us back to the trench we had captured. We began to make ourselves more secure by digging deeper and building the parapet in front. As morning broke the birds in the woods beyond broke into happy song.

"I stood up in the trench and looked across to the battlefield of the night before. What a sight! The bodies of Highlanders and Germans were lying all around, having paid the price of war. What a contrast! On one side peace and tranquillity, on the other bloodshed and death!"

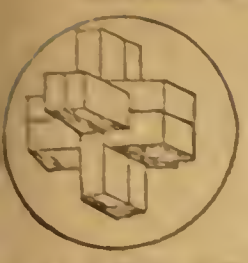
Another soldier wrote:

"We have a favorite blackbird that sits up in a tree above us and answers when the men whistle to it, no matter how heavy the firing may be. I was amused to watch two old magpies the other day. They wanted to cross over to the German lines, but every time they started to leave a row of poplars just below my shelter there would be a crack from some rifle and back they would turn and perch again to chatter about until they had plucked up courage for another try. Then the same thing would happen all over again."

And a member of the London Honourable Artillery writes:

"Just by our trenches there is a wood, and, although it is riddled with shot and shell both day and night, you would be surprised to know how full of life it is. There are two or three nightingales that sing most beautifully, at least one pheasant, one green woodpecker, a tree creeper, and, of course, the usual thrushes and blackbirds. Isn't it strange that they should choose a place like that to nest in? But it is very comforting to hear the old familiarwoodland notes again."

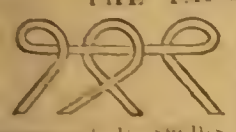
MIKADO BLOCK PUZZLE.



Imported from Japan. This neat little puzzle consists of six strangely cut pieces of white wood unassembled. The trick is to so assemble the blocks as to form a six-point cross. Price 12c, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

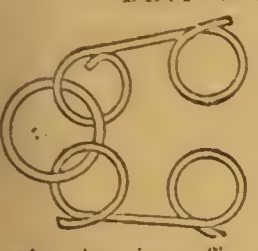
THE TANTALIZER PUZZLE.



Consists of one horizontal and one perpendicular piece of highly polished metal bent in such a manner that when assembled it seems utterly impossible to get them apart, but by following the directions it is very easily accomplished. This one is a brain twister. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

DEVIL'S LOCK PUZZLE.



Without exception, this is the hardest one of all. And yet, if you have the directions you can very easily do it. It consists of a ring passed through two links on shafts. The shanks of this puzzle are always in the way. Get one and learn how to take the ring off. Price, 15c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.

New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

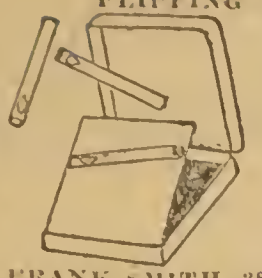
WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

FORTUNE TELLING CARDS.

The most comical fortune telling cards ever issued. Every one a joke that will arouse screams of laughter. They are shuffled, and one is drawn—red for ladies, white for gentlemen. On the drawn card is a mirth-provoking picture, and a few words revealing your fortune. Price, 5c, sent by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., New York.

FLIPPING CIGARETTE BOX.



It looks like a box of Between the Acts cigarettes, but when you open it a spring sends the contents of the box flying up in the air. More fun than a circus. Price, 15c, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., New York.

MARVELOUS MEMORY TRICK.

No. 74	No. 46	No. 34	No. 83
381909	550559	347189	291011
No. 16	No. 93	No. 25	No. 45
335729	201123	437077	459437

This amusing and interesting trick is performed with five cards containing 100 squares, which contain 100 different numbers. The performer can instantly name a series of six figures at a moment's notice by request of any spectator. The most marvelous feat of mind-reading ever invented. So easy that a child could perform the trick. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

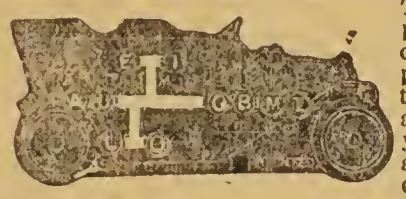
WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

WILLARD-JOHNSON PRIZE-FIGHT PUZZLE.

Four strips of cardboard, each three inches by one and a half inches, showing Willard and Johnson in various absurd postures. The solution in the puzzle lies in so arranging the strips that they show Willard in the complete picture, the heavyweight champion. Price, 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

AUTOMOBILE PUZZLE.



This little steel puzzle is one of the most perplexing on the market, and yet when you master it a child could do it. It measures 1¾ by 4 inches. The trick is to spell out words as indicated on the cut. Price 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

TWO-CARD MONTE.

This famous trick gets them all. You pick up a card and when you look at it you find you haven't got the card you thought you had.

Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

OLD COINS WANTED

$2 to $500 EACH paid for Hundreds of Coins dated before 1895. Keep ALL old Money. You may have Coins worth a Large Premium. Send $10c. for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x6. Get Posted at Once.

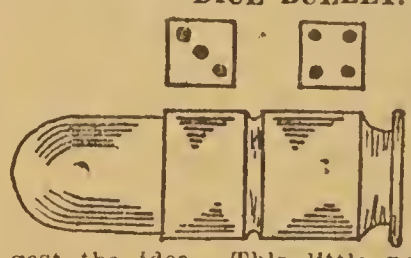
CLARKE COIN CO., Box 35, Le Roy, N. Y.

BINGO.

It is a little metal box. It looks very innocent, but is supplied with an ingenious mechanism which shoots off a harmless cap when it is opened. You can have more fun than a circus with this new trick. Place the BINGO in or under any other article and it will go off when the article is opened or removed. It can be used as a funny joke by being placed in a purse, cigarette box, or between the leaves of a magazine; also, under any movable article, such as a book, tray, dish, etc. The BINGO can also be used as a burglar alarm, as a theft preventer by being placed in a drawer, money till, or under a door or window or under any article that would be moved or disturbed should a theft be attempted. Price, 15c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

DICE BULLET.



This Bullet and contents will afford you lots of "game." Not, however, the kind of game usually "got" with bullets. The illustration may suggest the idea. This little novelty consists of a real shell fitted with a hollow "bullet," and contains two small bone dice. This will make a very acceptable gift to any of your soldier friends. Each 15 cents, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE BALANCING BIRD.

It measures more than four inches from tip to tip of wings, and will balance perfectly on the tip of your finger nail, on the point of a lead pencil, or on any pointed instrument, only the tip of the bill resting on the nail or pencil point, the whole body of the bird being suspended in the air with nothing to rest on. It will not fall off unless shaken off. A great novelty. Wonderful, amusing and instructive.

Price 10 cents, mailed postpaid.

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A SECRET

How Actors and Actresses Overcome Obesity and Reduce Their Figures Gracefully

HOW TO BE SLENDER

People wonder how it is that actresses and actors maintain their graceful figures, their buoyancy and litheness when the tendency is to become stout.

The popular theory that these heroines and heroes of the stage and the movies follow rigid systems of self-starvation (fasting) and strenuous exercising is erroneous. If they were to do this, they could not be so vigorous or supple. They would be unfit for their duties.

Neither can these performers take drastic drugs such as thyroid extract, salts, purgatives, etc., for reducing their weight, for those are injurious and weakening.

There is a very efficacious self-treatment known as the Korein system which consists in taking a harmless vegetable compound oil and following simple directions. The name of this oil is Oil of Korein. For convenience it is put up in little capsules, easy to swallow. They give the breath a delightful aromatic odor.

By following this method, the superfluous fat may be eliminated without causing any wrinkles. Indeed, the flesh becomes firm, while the skin is kept white and velvety.

If you find yourself too stout, you should lose no time in getting a small box of Oil of Korein. Most drug stores sell it. With each box is a $100 cash refund guarantee of assured weight reduction if the easy directions are followed.

When you have lost whatever surplus adiposity you desire, it will be easy for you to maintain a graceful, slender figure. By the Korein system persons have reduced from five to sixty pounds, according to their requirements of beauty.

There is usually a wonderful improvement in the health and mind. Irritability disappears and is replaced by cheerfulness. You see things in an optimistic light, your efficiency is developed—you are your real self. Surely this is better for you than to have your beauty spoiled by gross fatness. Enjoy life and hold the esteem of others.

A booklet is published called "Reduce Weight Happily" which will be mailed free (in plain wrapper) if you write to Korein Company, NK-103, Station F, New York, N. Y. You would do well to obtain this treatise, for it contains much information of value to you—if you are overstout, or if you are gradually becoming so. Correspondence is confidential.

If you have a friend who has tried in vain to reduce weight by dieting, tedious exercises, taking strong doses of purgatives, or other unsatisfactory methods, you will do a lifelong favor by calling attention to this—the true and genuine method.

Grow Your Hair

FREE RECIPE

After being almost totally bald a New York business man grew hair—and now has a prolific growth at age of 66—for which he will send the genuine recipe free on request to any man or woman who wishes to overcome dandruff or gain new hair growth. His address is John H. Brittain, BP-103, Station F, New York, N. Y. **This is genuine.**

TOBACCO HABIT

Easily Conquered in 3 Days

Picture No. 1—*Shows how tobacco has nearly wrecked a man's career. He has become nervous, dyspeptic and irritable; he cannot sleep well, has lost his energy and ambition.* No. 2—*The doctor says: "I'm giving you this medicine but it will do very little good, unless you stop killing yourself with tobacco."* No. 3—*Still a slave; another collapse.* No. 4—*Wife reads advertisement of Mr. Woods.* No. 5—*Writes for Woods' FREE BOOK.* No. 6—*Being convinced by multitude of proofs, he has ordered remedy which is in box postman is now delivering.* No. 7—*Has begun to overcome tobacco craving. Already is feeling much better; vigor and ambition returning.* No. 8—*Surprising improvement; all craving gone, filled with new courage and backed by good health.* No. 9—*Beginning anew.* No. 10—*Succeeding in business.* No. 11—*No trouble to resist temptation of tobacco in any form.* No. 12—*By clear-headedness, good health and energy, he has now become prosperous.*

Would You Like to Quit Tobacco Quickly and Easily and Enjoy Yourself a Thousand Times Better While in Robust Health?

STOP RUINING YOUR LIFE

Why continue to commit slow suicide when you can live a really contented life, if you only get your body and nerves right? It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to rid oneself of tobacco by suddenly stopping with "will-power"—don't do it. The correct way is to eliminate nicotine poison from the system, and genuinely overcome the craving.

Tobacco is poisonous and seriously injures health in several ways, causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gas belching, gnawing, or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach; constipation, headache, weak eyes, loss of vigor, red spots on skin, throat irritation, catarrh, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, melancholy, lung trouble, impure (poisoned) blood, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, bad teeth, foul breath, lassitude, lack of ambition, weakening and falling out of hair and many other disorders.

Overcome that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco, or snuff.

Here is an opportunity to receive FREE a carefully compiled treatise on the subject, containing interesting and valuable information that you should be glad to learn about. This book tells all about the renowned THREE DAYS' METHOD by which thousands and thousands saved themselves from the life-wrecking tobacco habit. Full particulars, including the book on tobacco and snuff habit, will be mailed FREE TO YOU, in plain wrapper, postpaid. All you need do is merely REQUEST IT. A postcard will do. Address

FREE

EDWARD J. WOODS, WH 103 Station F, New York, N. Y.

NOTE.—To those who are injuring their health, making themselves nervous, dyspeptic, etc., by excessive use of cigarettes, cigars, pipe, snuff or chewing tobacco:—here is your opportunity to quickly and easily become your own master.

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Here is our New Style E. D. L. Phonograph—the latest improvement—without the horn. It is a perfect beauty. Mahogany finish, tone arm black japanned, nickel winding crank, accurately constructed, smooth running spring motor, speed regulator, stop lever and 6¾ turn table. New improved sound box with mica diaphragm.

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PLAYS ANY DISC RECORD

Both lateral and vertical cut, 6, 7 or 8 inches. This machine will give you more entertainment than anything you ever owned. Strong and durable. No parts to get out of order.

Send No Money Just your name and we will send you 24 of our Art Pictures to dispose of on special offer at 25c each. Send us the $6 you collect and for your trouble we will send this new improved E. D. L. Phonograph and a selection of 6 records, free for your trouble. You can dispose of pictures and earn this great machine in a few hours' time.

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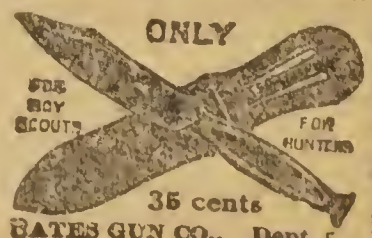

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HUNTING KNIFE AND SHEATH. Best forged steel, tempered, ground and polished. Bowie point, 4-inch blade; strong metal handle to meet the rugged use of woods or camp. Sheath made of strong leather, with slotted tang to carry on belt. Lone Scouts, this is the biggest bargain you ever saw. Price 35 cents post paid. Catalog Free.

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YOUR NAME ON A RUBBER STAMP, 15 cts. With address, 25 cts. Ink pad, 20 cts. Agents wanted. Central Stamp Works, New Castle, Ind.

BOYS, GIRLS, EARN THRIFT STAMPS. We will send you 4 stamps or let you keep $1 after selling 20 bottles of fine perfume at 10 cents each. Boys and girls in every state. Send it easy. Requires no money. Perfume sent prepaid. Be first in your locality. Eckhoff Laboratories, 1615 Grand Ave., St. Paul, Minn.

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MARRY; Many Rich. Particulars for stamp. Mrs. Morrison, 3053 W. Holden, Seattle, Wash.

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WANTED TO BUY typewriters, any make. Give description. M. M. Selde, 142 E. 32d St., New York.

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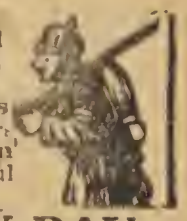

This Book tells in detail **truthful stories** of Brutal Assaults on **helpless women** by Prussian Soldiers and Officers. Translated from the French and in **plain** language. **27 Illustrations.** A Frightful and SENSATIONAL book. **10** Cents.

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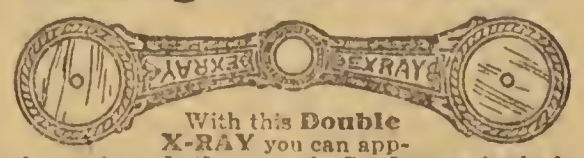

With this **Double X-RAY** you can apparently see thru **cloth** or wood, See **bones** in the body, makes the **flesh** look transparent. An optical illusion, By mail **10 cts:** Three for **25 cts.** Postpaid.

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With these wonderful Cards you can apparently foretell events in the life of yourself or friends. 36 Cards 2 x 3 inches in size with symbols of **prophecy** on each card. Lots of Fun at parties etc. By mail **10 cts.** Stamps or Coin. **2 cts.** extra for postage if ordered alone.

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Latest Craze in Jokes. A little article in a box. Show it to your Girl. It may make her **BLUSH** but she will want one at once to show her other fellow. Boys, Girls, Men, Women and Old Maids all want the Tango Table. Cannot be described here. 10 cts. by mail.

INVISIBLE PHOTOGRAPHS

Real Photographs of **beautiful women** in different poses. When received through the mail, they seem to be **blank paper**, but in a few seconds and at no cost to you, they can be turned into **REAL PHOTOGRAPHS.** Boys! These are **classy** pictures and you will like them.

By mail **3** for **10 cts.** **10** for **25** cts.

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HORRORS of the TRAFFIC

This book gives details of the blackest slavery of the human race.

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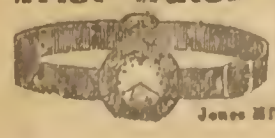

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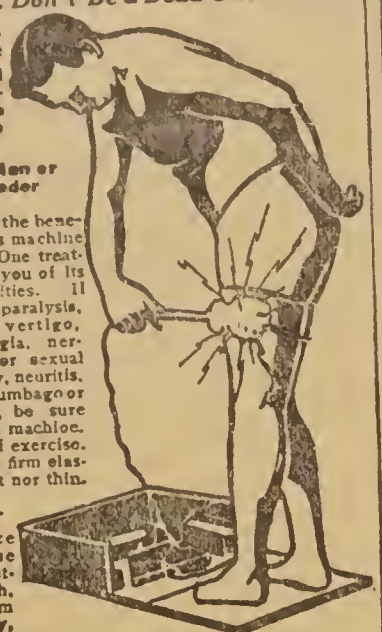

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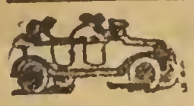

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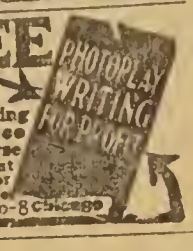

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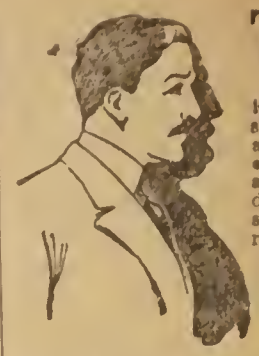

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